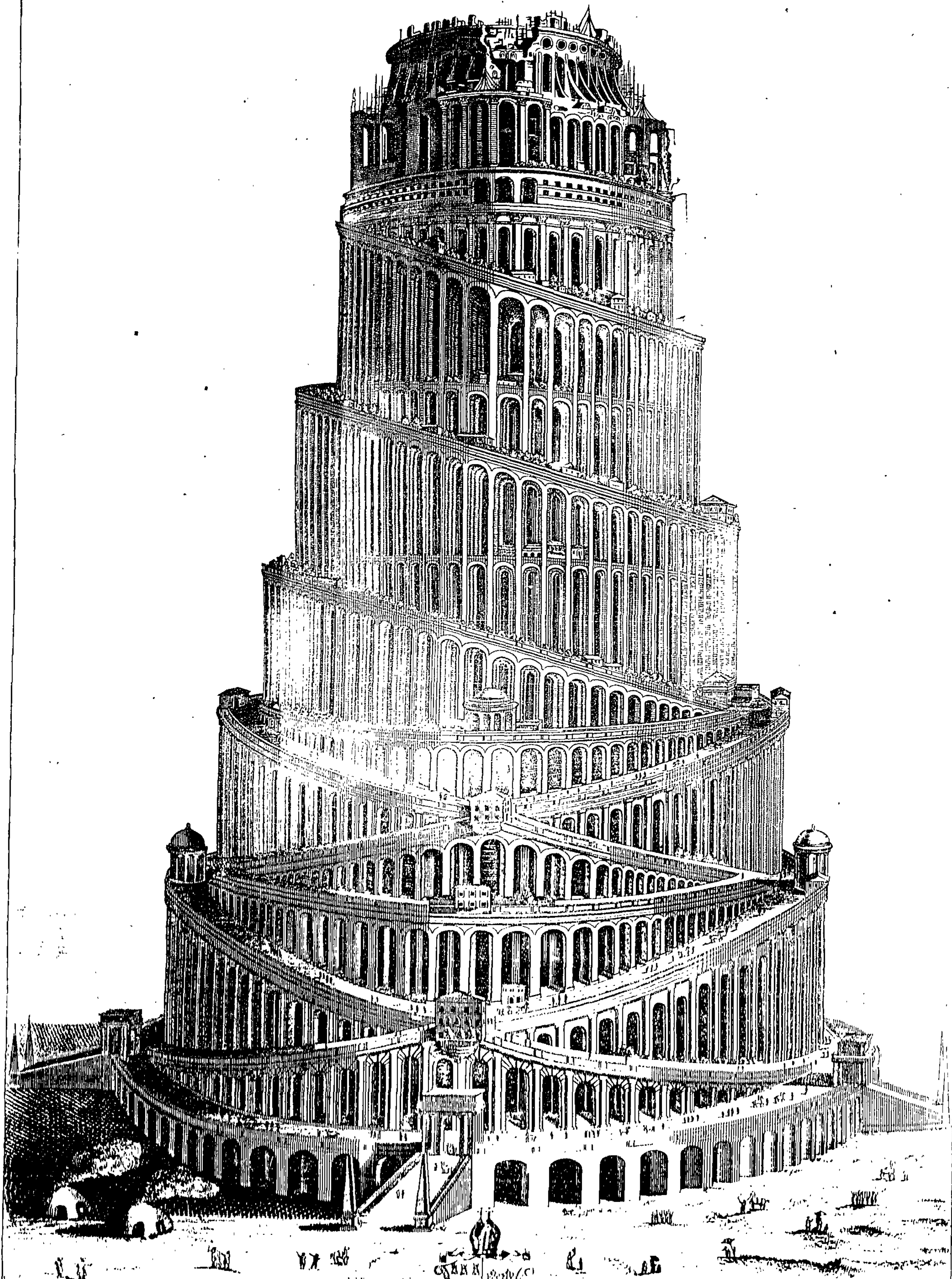


# A Prospect of the Tower of Babel



To the R<sup>l</sup> Reverend Father in God Louis  
Archbishop of OXFORD this Plate is most  
humbly Inscribed by his Lordship's most  
Dutyfull & Obedient Son & Serv<sup>t</sup> Tho<sup>s</sup> Stackhouse



A. M.  
1757, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
2247, &c.

Language, in a considerable Tract of Time, to be so very *small*, that we shall be at a Loss to conceive; whence so many, and so various Languages cou'd have proceeded, unless we take in the Account of *Moses*, which unriddles the whole Diffi-

culty, and justly ascribes them to the same Almighty Power, which taught our first Parents to speak *one* Tongue in the Beginning, and, in After-ages, inspir'd the Apostles of *Jesus Christ* with the Gift of *many*.

Gen. Ch. xi.  
to Ver. 10.

## DISSERTATION II.

### Of the Tower of BABEL.

That there  
really was  
such a Build-  
ing as the  
Tower of Ba-  
bel.

**T**HAT there really was such a Building as the Tower of *Babel*, erected some Ages after the Recovery of the Earth from the Deluge, is evident from the concurrent Testimony of several Heathen Writers. For when (besides the particular Description which (b) *Herodotus*, the Father of the *Greek* Historians, gives us of it) we find *Abydenus* (as he is (c) quoted by *Eusebius*) telling us, “ That the first Race of Men, big with a fond Conceit of the Bulk and Strength of their Bodies, built, in the Place where *Babylon* now stands, a Tower of so prodigious an Height, that it seem'd to touch the Skies, but that the Winds and the Gods overthrew the mighty Structure upon their Heads:” When we find *Eupolemus* (as he is (d) cited by *Alexander Polyhistor*) leaving it upon Record, “ That the City of *Babylon* was first built by *Giants*, who escap'd from the *Flood*; that these *Giants* built the most famous Tower in all History; and that this Tower was dash'd to Pieces by the Almighty Power of God, and the *Giants* dispers'd, and scatter'd over the Face of the whole Earth:” And lastly, when (e) we find *Josephus* mentioning it, as a receiv'd Doctrine among the *Sibyls*, “ That, at a certain Time, when the whole World spake all one Language, the People of those Days gathered together, and rais'd a mighty Tower, which they carried up to so extravagant an Height, that it look'd as if

“ they had propos'd to scale Heaven from the Top of it; but that the Gods let the Winds loose upon it, which, with a violent Blast, beat it down to the Ground, and, at the same Time, struck the Builders with an utter Forgetfulness of their native Tongue, and substituted new and unknown Languages in the Room of it:” When we find these, and several other Authors, I say, that might be produc'd, bearing Testimony to *Moses*, in most of the material Circumstances attending the Building of this Tower, we cannot but conclude, that the Representation, which he gives us of the whole Transaction, is agreeable to Truth.

THE Short is, all the Remains, now extant, of the most antient Heathen Historians (except *Sanchoniatho*) concur in confirming the *Mosaick* Account of this Matter, and the Sum of their Testimonies is, — (f) That a huge Tower was built by giantick Men at *Babylon*; that there was then but one Language among Mankind; that the Attempt was offensive to the Gods; and that therefore they demolish'd the Tower, overwhelm'd the Workmen, divided their Language, and dispers'd them over the Face of the whole Earth.

THERE is one Circumstance indeed, wherein we find these ancient Historians differing with *Moses*, and that is, in affirming, that the Tower was demolish'd by the Anger of God, and by the Violence of the Winds; but as it seems more consistent with the Divine Wisdom (for *the* Admonition

That it was  
not blown  
down, or de-  
stroy'd.

(b) Lib. 1. c. 181. (c) Preparat. Evang. 1. 9. c. 14. (d) Alex. Polyhist. apud Euseb. Prep. Evan. 1. 9. c. 18. (e) Antiq. 1. 1. c. 5. (f) Vid. Josephus's Antiq. 1. 1. c. 5. Eusebius's Prepar. Evang. 1. 9. c. 14, &c. and Huetius's Quæst. Alnetan. 1. 2. p. 189.



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2247, &c.

*Admonition* of Posterity) to have such a Monument of Men's Folly and Ambition for some Time standing; so we may observe, that (in Confirmation of our sacred Penman, who speaks of it as a Thing existing in his Time) *Herodotus*, the *Greek* Historian, tells us expressly, that he himself actually saw it, as it was repair'd by *Belus*, or some of his Successors; *Pliny*, the *Latin* Historian, that it was not destroy'd in his Days; and some modern Travellers (whom by and by we shall have Occasion to quote) that there are some visible Remains of it extant even now. And therefore the Fancy of its being beat down with the Winds is taken up, in pure Conformity \* to some *Persian* Tales, recorded of *Nimrod*, whom these Historians suppose to be the first Projector of it.

Who were the  
Builders of it.

It cannot be deny'd indeed, but that the Generality of Interpreters, meeting with the Expression of (g) *the Children of Men*, whereby they understand bad Men and Infidels, as oppos'd to *the Children of God*, which usually denote the Good and the Faithful, are apt to imagine, that none of the Family of *Shem*, which retain'd (as they say) the true Worship and Religion, were engag'd in the Work, but some of the worser Sort of People only, who had degenerated from the Piety of their Ancestors: But by *the Children of Men* in that Place, 'tis evident, that we are to understand all Mankind, because, in the initial Words of the Chapter, they are call'd (b) *the whole Earth*; nor can we well conceive how, in so short a Time, after that

awakening Judgment of the Deluge, the major Part of Mankind, even while *Noah* and his Sons were still alive, shou'd be so far corrupted in their Principles, as to deserve the odious Character of *Unbelievers*.

From Gén. xi.  
to Ver. 10!

(i) *JOSEPHUS* indeed, and some other Authors are clearly of Opinion, that *Nimrod*, a Descendant from the impious *Ham*, was the great Abettor of this Design, and the Ringleader of those, who combin'd in the Execution of it. But, tho' the Undertaking seems to agree very well with the Notion, which the Scripture gives us of that ambitious Prince; yet, besides that (k) others, extremely well vers'd in all *Jewish* Antiquities, have made it appear, that *Nimrod* was either very young at the Time, or even not yet born, when the Project of Building the Tower and City was first form'd, there is Reason to believe (even supposing him then alive, and in great Power and Authority among his People) that he was not in any tolerable Condition to undertake so great a Work.

THE Account, which *Moses* gives us of him is, — That he (l) *began to be a mighty one in the Earth*, which the best Writers explain, by his being the first, who laid the Foundation of *regal* Power among Mankind; but it is scarce imaginable, how an Empire, able to effect such a Work, cou'd be entirely acquir'd, and so thoroughly establish'd by one and the same Person, as to allow Leisure for Amusements of such infinite Toil and Trouble.

GREAT

\* The Author of the Book called *Malem* tells us this Story, — That when *Nimrod* saw that the Fire, into which he caus'd *Abraham* to be cast, for not submitting to the worshipping of Idols, did him no Damage, he resolv'd to ascend into Heaven, that he might see that great God, whom *Abraham* reveal'd to him. In vain did his Courtiers endeavour to divert him from this Design: He was resolv'd to accomplish it, and therefore gave Orders for the Building of a Tower, that might be as high as possible. They work'd upon it for three Years together: And when he went up to the Top, he was much surpriz'd to see himself as far from Heaven, as when he was upon the Ground; but his Confusion was much increas'd, when they came to inform him, the next Morning, that his Tower was fallen, and dash'd in Pieces. He commanded them then, that another should be built, which might be higher and stronger than the former: But, when this met with the same Fate, and he still continu'd an obdurate Persecuter of those, who worshipp'd the true God, God took from him the greatest Part of his Subjects, by the Division and Confusion of their Tongues, and those, who still adher'd to him, he killed by a Cloud of Flies, which he sent amongst them. *Galmet's* Dictionary on the Word *Nimrod*. The Poets, in like Manner, having corrupted the Tradition of this Event with Fictions of their own, do constantly bring in *Jupiter* defeating the Attempts of the *Titans*:

*Fulmina de Caeli jaculatus Jupiter arce,*

*Pertit in Authores Pondera vasta suos, &c.*

OVID.

(g) Gen. xi. 5.

(b) Ver. 1.

(i) Antiq. l. 1. c. 5.

(k) Bochart's Phaleg, l. 1. c. 10.

(l) Gen. x. 8.



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(m) GREAT and mighty Empires indeed have seemingly been acquir'd by single Persons; but when we come to examine into the true Original of them, we shall find, that they began upon the Foundations of Kingdoms, already attain'd by their Ancestors, and establish'd by the Care and Wisdom of many successive Rulers for several Generations, and after a long Exercise of their People in Arts and Arms, which gave them a singular Advantage over other Nations, that they conquer'd. In this Manner grew the Empires of *Cyrus*, *Alexander*, and all the great Conquerors in the World: Nor can we, in all the Records of History, find one large Dominion, from the very Foundation of the World, that was ever erected and established by one *private* Person. And therefore we have abundant Reason to infer, that *Nimrod*, though confessedly the Beginner of *sovereign* Authority, could, at this Time, have no great Kingdom under his Command.

BUT admitting his Kingdom to be larger than this Supposition; yet, from that Day to this, we can meet with no Works of this Kind attempted, but from a Fullness of Wealth, and Wantonness of Power, and after Peace, Luxury, and long Leisure had introduc'd and establish'd Arts: So that nothing can be more absurd, than to attribute such a prodigious Work to the Power and Vanity of *one* Man, in the Infancy both of Arts and Empire, and when we can scarce suppose, that there was any such Thing, as *artificial* Wealth in the World.

SINCE then this Building was undoubtedly very antient, as antient as the Scripture makes it, and yet could not be effected by any separate Society, in the Period assign'd for it, the only probable Opinion is, that it was (as we said before) undertook, and executed by the united Labours of all the People, that were then on the Face of the Earth. 'Tis not unlikely however, that, after the Dispersion of the

People, and their leaving the Place unfinished, (n) *Nimrod*, and his Subjects, coming out of *Arabia*, or some other neighbouring Country, might, after their Fright was over, settle at *Babel*, and there building the City of *Babylon*, and repairing the Tower, make it the Metropolis (as afterwards it was) of all the *Assyrian* Empire.

To this Purpose, there is a very remarkable Passage (o) in *Diodorus Siculus*, where he tells us; "That, on the Walls of one of the *Babylonian* Palaces was pourtray'd a general Hunting of all Sorts of wild Beasts, with the Figure of a Woman on Horse-back, piercing a Leopard, and a Man, fighting with a Lion; and that, on the Walls of the other Palace were Armies in Battalia, and Huntings of several Kinds." Now of this *Nimrod*, the sacred Historian informs us, that he was a great and remarkable *Hunter*, so as to pass into a Proverb; and this Occupation he might the rather pursue, as the best Means of training up his Companions to Exploits of War, and of making himself popular, by the Glory he gained, and the publick Good he did, in destroying those wild Beasts, which, at that Time, infested the World. And as this was a Part of his Character, the most rational Account that we can give of these Ornaments on the *Babylonian* Palaces, is, that they were set up by some of *Nimrod's* Descendants, in their Ancestor's Imperial City, in Memory of the great Founder of their Family, and of an Empire, which afterwards grew so famous.

(p) *EUTYCHIUS*, Patriarch of *Alexandria*, will needs have it, that *Nimrod* was the first Author of the Religion of the *Magians*, the Worshippers of Fire: And from hence, very probably, (q) a late Archbishop of our own has thought, that this Tower of *Babel* (whose Form was *Pyramidal*, as he says, and so resembling Fire, whose Flame ascends in a *conick* Shape) was a Monument design'd for the Honour of the *Sun*, as the most probable Cause

From Gen. xi.  
to Ver. 10.

For what Purpose it was built.

Q q q

(m) Revelation Examined, Vol. II. Dissert. III.  
(p) Calmet's Dictionary on the Word *Nimrod*.

(n) Bochart's Phaleg, l. i. c. 10.  
(q) Tenison, of Idolatry.

(o) Lib. i.

Tho' he might afterwards settle there.



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2247, &c.

Cauſe of drying up the Waters of the Flood. For, “ tho’ the Sun, *ſays he*, was “ not merely a God of the Hills, yet the “ Heathens thought it ſuitable to his advancement Station, to worſhip him upon “ Aſcents, either *natural*, or, where the “ Country was flat, *artificial*, that they “ might approach, as near as poſſibly they “ cou’d, the Deity they ador’d.” This certainly accounts for God’s Diſpleaſure againſt the Builders, and why he was concern’d to defeat their Undertaking; but, as there is no Foundation for this Conjecture in Scripture, and the Date of this Kind of Idolatry was not perhaps ſo early, as is pretended; the two Ends, which *Mofes* declares the Builders had in View, in forming their Project, will be Motives ſufficient for their undertaking it.

FOR, if we conſider, that they were now in the miſt of a vaſt Plain, undiſtinguiſh’d by Roads, Buildings, or Boundaries of any Kind, except Rivers; that the Proviſion of Paſture, and other Neceſſaries, oblig’d them to ſeparate; and, that, when they were ſeparated, there was a Neceſſity of ſome *Land-mark* to bring them together again upon Occaſion, otherwiſe, all Communication, and, with it, all the Pleaſures of Life muſt be cut off; we can hardly imagine any Thing more natural, and fit for this Purpoſe, than the Erection of a *Tower*, large and lofty enough to be ſeen at great Diſtances, and, conſequently, ſufficient to guide them from all Quarters of that immenſe Region; and, when they had occaſion to correſpond, or come together, nothing certainly could be more proper, than the contiguous Buildings of a City, for their Reception, and convenient Communication.

If we conſider likewise, that all the Pride and Magnificence of their Anceſtors were now defac’d, and utterly deſtroy’d by the Deluge, without the leaſt Remains, or Memorial of their Grandeur;

that, conſequently, the Earth was a clear Stage, whereon to erect new and unri- val’d Monuments of Glory and Renown to themſelves; and that, at this Juncture, they wanted neither Art nor Abilities; neither Numbers nor Materials, to make themſelves Maſters of what their Vanity projected; we may reaſonably ſuppoſe, that the Affectation of Renown was another Motive to their Undertaking; ſince it is very well known, that this is the very Principle, which has, all along, govern’d the whole Race of Mankind, in all the Works and Monuments of Magnificence, the *Mauſoleums, Pillars, Palaces, Pyramids*, and whatever has been erected of any pompous Kind, from the Foundation of the World to this very Day. So that, taking their Reſolution under the united Light of theſe two Motives, the Reaſoning of the Builders will run thus. “ We are “ here in a vaſt Plain: † Our Diſperſion is inevitable: Our Increate, and “ the Neceſſaries of Life demand it. We “ are ſtrong and happy, when united; “ but, when divided, we ſhall be weak “ and wretched. Let us then contrive “ ſome Means of Union and friendly “ Society, which may, at the ſame “ Time, perpetuate our Fame and Memory. And what Means ſo proper “ for theſe Purpoſes, as a magnificent “ City, and a mighty Tower, whoſe Top “ may touch the Skies? The Tower “ will be a *Land-mark* to us, through the “ whole Extent of this Plain, and a Center of Unity, to prevent our being diſpers’d; and the City, which may prove “ the *Metropolis* of the whole Earth, “ will, at all Times, afford us a commodious Habitation. Since then we need “ fear no Diſſolution of our Works by “ any future Deluge, let us erect ſomething, that may immortalize our Names, “ and outvie the Labours of our *Antediluvian* Fathers.” And that this ſeems to

From Gen. xi.  
to Ver. 10.

† Here they ſpeak as if they fear’d a Diſperſion; but it is hard to tell for what Cauſe, unleſs it was this,——That *Noah* having projected a Diviſion of the Earth among his Poſterity, (for it was a deliberate Buſineſs, as we noted before) the People had no Mind to ſubmit to it, and therefore built a Fortreſs to defend themſelves in their Reſolution of not yielding to his Deſign; but what they dreaded, they brought upon themſelves by their own vain Attempt to avoid it. Vid. *Patrick’s* Comment. and *Uſher* ad A. M. 1757.



A. M.  
1757, <sup>53c.</sup>  
Ant. Christ.  
2247, <sup>53c.</sup>

to have been the Reasoning of their Minds, will further appear, if we come now to take a short Survey of the Dimensions of the Building, according to the Account, which the best Historians have given us of it.

The Dimensions  
of the Tower.

It is the Opinion of the learned (r) *Bochart*, that, whatever we read of the Tower, enclos'd in the Temple of *Belus*, may very properly be apply'd to the Tower of *Babel*; because, upon due Search and Examination, he conceives them to be one and the same Structure. Now of this Tower (s) *Herodotus* tells us, that it was a Square of a Furlong on each Side, i. e. half a Mile in the whole Circumference, whose Height, being equal to its *Basis*, was divided into eight Towers, built one upon another; but what made it look as divided into eight Towers, was very probably the Manner of its Ascent. *The Passage to go up it*, continues our Author, *was a circular, or winding Way, carry'd round the Outside of the Building to its highest Point*: (t) From whence it seems most likely, that the whole Ascent was, by the Benching-in, drawn in a sloping Line, from the Bottom to the Top, eight Times round it, which wou'd make the Appearance of eight Towers one above another. This Way was so exceeding broad, that it afforded Space for Horses and Carts, and other Means of Carriage to meet and turn; and the Towers, which look'd like so many Stories upon one another, were each of them Seventy-five Foot high, in which were many stately Rooms, with arch'd Roofs supported by Pillars, which were made Parts of the Temple, after the Tower became consecrated to that idolatrous Use; and, on the uppermost of the Towers, which was held more sacred, and

where their most solemn Devotions were perform'd, there was an *Observatory*, by the Benefit of which it was, that the *Babylonians* advanc'd their Skill in *Astronomy* beyond all other Nations.

SOME Authors, † following a Mistake in the *Latin* Version of *Herodotus*, wherein the lowest of these Towers is said to be a Furlong thick, and a Furlong high, will have each of the other Towers to be of a proportionate Height, which amounts to a Mile in the Whole: But the *Greek* of *Herodotus* (which is the genuine Text of that Author) says no such Thing, but only, that it was a Furlong long, and a Furlong broad, without mentioning any Thing of its Height; and (u) *Strabo*, in his Description of it, (calling it a *Pyramid*, because of its decreasing, or benching-in at every Tower) says of the Whole, that it was a Furlong high, and a Furlong on every Side: For to reckon every Tower a Furlong high, wou'd make the Thing incredible, even though the Authority of both these Historians were *for*, as they are *against*, it. Taking it only as it is describ'd by *Strabo*, it was prodigious enough; since, according to his Dimensions only, without adding any farther, it was one of the most wonderful Works in the World, and much exceeded the greatest of the *Pyramids* of *Egypt*.

IN this Condition continu'd the Tower of *Babel*, or the Temple of *Belus*, until the Time of *Nebuchadnezzar*; but he enlarg'd it by vast Buildings, which were erected round it, in a Square of two Furlongs on every Side, or a Mile in Circumference; and enclos'd the Whole with a Wall of two Miles and an half in Compass, in which were several Gates leading to the Temple, all of solid Brass, which very probably were made of the *brazen Sea*,

(r) Vid. Phaleg. Part 1. l. 1. c. 9. (s) Lib. 1. (t) *Prideaux's* Connection, Part 1.

† The Words of *Herodotus* are: *Ἐν μέσῳ δὲ τῷ ἱερῷ πύργῳ σκαλοτάπηται, σκαλὶν δὲ τὸ μῆκος, καὶ τὸ εὖρος καὶ ἐπὶ ταῖς τοῖς πύργοις ἑλλοις πύργος ἐπιτέθηκε, καὶ ἑτέρος μάλ᾽ ἐπὶ ταῖς, μέγας δὲ ὁνομαζόμενος πύργων.* Now, tho' it be allow'd, that the Word *μῆκος* may signify *Height*, as well as *Length*, yet it is much better to take *Herodotus* in the latter Sense here; otherwise the Tower (if every Story answers the lowest) will rise to a prodigious Height, though nothing near to what *Jerom* (l. 5. Comment. in *Esaiam*) affirms, from the Testimony of Eye-witnesses, as he says, who examin'd the Remains of it very carefully, viz. that it was no less than four Miles high. *Univ. Hist.* l. 1. c. 2.

(u) Lib. 16.



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Sea, the brazen Pillars, and the other brazen Vessels, which were carried to Babylon from the Temple of Jerusalem: For so we are told, that all the sacred Vessels, which Nebuchadnezzar carried from thence, he put (x) into the House of his God in Babylon, i. e. into the House, or Temple of Bel, (for † that was the Name of the great God of the Babylonians) surrounding it with the Pomp of these additional Buildings, and adorning it with the Spoils of the Temple of Jerusalem. This Tower did not subsist much above an hundred Years, when Xerxes, coming from his Grecian Expedition, wherein he had suffer'd a vast Loss of Men and Money, out of Pretence of Religion, († as being himself a Magian, and, consequently, detesting the Worship of God by Images) (y) but, in Reality, with a Design to repair the Damages, he had sustain'd, demolish'd it, and laid it all in Rubbish; having first plunder'd it of all its immense Riches, among which were several Images, or Statues of massy Gold, and (z) one particularly of forty Feet high, which very probably was † that, which Nebu-

chadnezzar (a) consecrated in the Plains of Dura. From Gen. xi. to Ver. 10.

Thus fell this great Monument of Antiquity, and was never repair'd any more: For, tho' Alexander, at his Return to Babylon, after his Indian Expedition, express'd his Intentions of rebuilding it, and, accordingly, set ten thousand Men on work to rid the Place of its Rubbish; yet, before they had made any Progress therein, that great Conqueror died on a sudden, and has ever since left both the City and Tower so far defac'd, that the very People of the Country are at a Loss to tell where their ancient Situation was. Since some late Travellers however have, in their Opinions, found out the true Ruins, and Remains of this once-renown'd Structure, we shall not be averse to gratify our Reader's Curiosity (b) with an Account of what one, of the best Authority among them, has thought fit to communicate to the Publick.

“ IN the Middle of a vast and level Plain, says he, about a Quarter of a League from the Euphrates (which, in that Place, runs Westward) appears an  
“ Heap

The present Remains of it.

(x) 2 Chron. xxxvi. 7. Dan. i. 2.

† Bel is suppos'd to have been the same with Nimrod, and to have been call'd Bel from his Dominion, and Nimrod from his Rebellion; for Bel, or Baal (which is the same) signifies Lord, and Nimrod, Rebel, in the Jewish and Chaldean Language: The former was his Babylonish Name, by Reason of his Empire in that Place; and the latter his Scripture-Name, by Reason of his Rebellion, in revolting from God, to follow his own wicked Designs. Prideaux's Connection, Part I. l. 2.

† The two great Sects of Religion among the Persians, were the Magians and Sabians. The Sabians worshipp'd God thro' sensible Images, or rather worshipp'd the Images themselves. The Babylonians were the first Founders of this Sect; for they first brought in the Worship of the Planets, and afterwards that of Images, and from thence propagated it to all other Nations, where it prevail'd. The Magians, on the contrary, worship no Images of any Kind, but God only, together with two subordinate Principles, the one, the Author and Director of all Good, and the other, the Author and Director of all Evil. These two Sects always had a mortal Enmity to each other; and therefore it is no Wonder, that Xerxes, who had always the Archimagus attending him in his Expeditions, with several other inferior Magi, in the Capacity of his Chaplains, should by them be prevail'd on to take Babylon in his Way to Susa, in order to destroy all the idolatrous Temples there.

(y) Prideaux's Connection, Part I.

(z) Diodorus Siculus, l. 2.

† Nebuchadnezzar's golden Image is said indeed in Scripture to have been 60 Cubits, i. e. ninety Foot high, but that must be understood of the Image and Pedestal all together: For, that Image being said to have been but six Cubits broad or thick, it is impossible that the Image cou'd have been sixty Cubits high; for that makes its Height to be ten Times its Breadth or Thickness, which exceeds all the Proportions of a Man, so far as no Man's Height is above six Times his Thickness, measuring the slenderest Man living at the Waist. But, where the Breadth of this Image was measur'd, it is not said: Perhaps it was from Shoulder to Shoulder, and then the Proportion of six Cubits Breadth will bring down the Height exactly to the Measure, which Diodorus has mention'd. For, the usual Height of a Man being four and an half of his Breadth between the Shoulders, it must, according to this Proportion, have been twenty-seven Cubits high, which is forty Foot and an half. Nor must it be forgot what Diodorus further tells us, viz. That this Image contain'd a thousand Babylonish Talents of Gold, which, upon a moderate Computation, amounts to three Millions and an half of our Money. But now, if we advance the Height of the Statue to ninety Foot without the Pedestal, it will increase the Value to a Sum incredible; and therefore it is necessary to take the Pedestal likewise into the Height mention'd by Daniel. Prideaux's Connection, Part I. l. 2.

(a) Dan. iii. 1.

(b) Vid. Pietro della Valle, Part II. l. 17.



A. M.  
1757. &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
2247. &c.

“ Heap of ruin’d Buildings, like a huge  
“ Mountain, the Materials of which are so  
“ confounded together, that one knows  
“ not what to make of it. Its Figure is  
“ square, and rises in Form of a *Pyramid*,  
“ with four Fronts, which answer to the  
“ four Quarters of the Compass, but it  
“ seems longer from *North* to *South*, than  
“ from *East* to *West*, and is (as far as I cou’d  
“ judge by my pacing it) a large Quarter  
“ of a League. Its Situation and Form cor-  
“ respond with that Pyramid, which *Strabo*  
“ calls the Tower of *Belus*; but, even in  
“ his Time, it had nothing remaining of  
“ the Stairs, and other Ornaments mention-  
“ ed by *Herodotus*, for the greatest Part of  
“ it was ruin’d by *Xerxes*, and *Alexander*,  
“ who design’d to have restor’d it to its  
“ former Lustre, but was prevented by  
“ Death.

“ THERE appear no Marks of Ruins  
“ round the Compass of this rude Mass,  
“ to make one believe, that so great a City  
“ as *Babylon* ever stood here. All that  
“ one can discover, within 50 or 60 Paces  
“ of it, is only the Remains here and  
“ there of some Foundations of Buildings;  
“ and the Country round about it is so flat  
“ and level, that one can hardly conceive  
“ it shou’d be chosen for the Situation of  
“ so noble a City, or, that there ever were  
“ any considerable Structures on it. But  
“ considering withal, that it is now at  
“ least four thousand Years since that City  
“ was built, and that, in the Time of  
“ *Diodorus Siculus*, as he tells us, it was  
“ almost reduc’d to nothing, I, for my  
“ Part, am astonish’d, that there appears  
“ so much as there does.

“ THE Height of this Mountain of  
“ Ruins is not in every Part equal, but  
“ exceeds the highest Palace in *Naples*.  
“ It is a mishapen Mass, wherein there is  
“ no Appearance of Regularity. In some  
“ Places it rises in Points, is craggy, and  
“ inaccessible: in others it is smooth, and  
“ of easy Ascent.—Whether ever there  
“ were Steps to ascend it, or Doors to en-  
“ ter into it, ’tis impossible at present to

discover: And from hence one may  
“ easily judge, that the Stairs ran winding  
“ about on the Outside, and that, being  
“ the less solid Parts, they were the soonest  
“ demolish’d, so that there is not the least  
“ Sign to be seen of them now.

“ IN the Inside of it, there are some  
“ Grottos, but so ruin’d, that one can  
“ make nothing of them; and ’tis much  
“ to be doubted, with regard to some of  
“ them, whether they were built at the  
“ same Time with the Work, or made  
“ since by the Peasants for Shelter, which  
“ last seems to be more likely. ’Tis evi-  
“ dent from these Ruins however, that  
“ the Tower of *Nimrod* (so our Author  
“ calls it) was built with great and thick  
“ Bricks, as I carefully observ’d, causing  
“ Holes to be dug in several Places for  
“ that Purpose; but they do not appear  
“ to have been burnt, but only dried in  
“ the Sun, which is extremely hot in those  
“ Parts.

“ IN laying these Bricks, neither Lime  
“ nor Sand was made use of, but only Earth  
“ temper’d and petrify’d; and in those  
“ Parts, which made the Floors, there had  
“ been mingled with the Earth (which  
“ serv’d instead of Lime) bruish’d Reeds,  
“ or hard Straws, such as large Mats are  
“ made of, to strengthen the Work. In  
“ several other Places, especially where the  
“ strongest Buttresses were to be, there  
“ were, at due Distances, other Bricks of  
“ the same Size, but more solid, and burnt  
“ in Kilns, and set in good Lime, or Bitu-  
“ men, but the greater Number were such  
“ as were dried in the Sun.”

THIS is the most of what this sedulous  
Traveller cou’d discover; and yet, upon  
the Foot of these Remarks, he makes no  
Doubt to declare, “ That this Ruin was  
“ the antient *Babel*, or the Tower of *Nim-*  
“ *rod* (as he calls it) for, besides the Evi-  
“ dence of its Situation, ’tis so acknow-  
“ ledg’d to be, and so call’d by the Inha-  
“ bitants of the Country to this very Day:”  
Notwithstanding some others are of a con-  
trary Opinion, viz. (c) That this and some

R r r

other



A. M.  
1757, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
2247, &c.

A moral Re-  
flection here-  
upon.

other Ruins, not far distant from it, are not the Remains of the original Tower, but rather some later Structures of the Arabs.

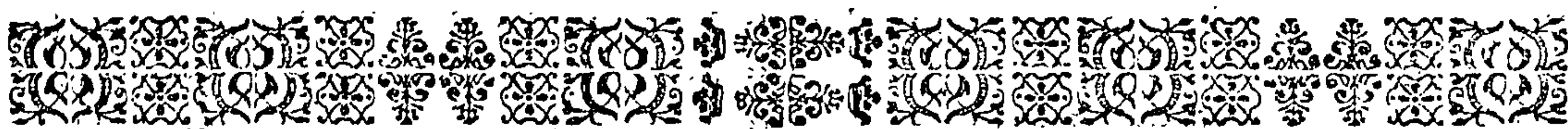
WE cannot dismiss this Subject however, without making some Reflections on the Vanity and Transitoriness of all sublunary Things, as well as the Veracity of all God's Predictions; since that goodly City, which was once the Pride of all Asia, and the design'd Metropolis of the whole Universe, according to the Words (d) of the Prophets, *is fallen, is fallen low, very low, and become a dwelling Place for Dragons, an Astonishment, and an Hissing*

(d) Isaiah xxi. 9. and Jer. li. 37.

*without an Inhabitant; and that stately Tower, which once rear'd its Head on high, and seem'd to menace the Stars, is brought down to the Ground, even to the Dust; in so much, that the Place of it is to be seen no more; or, if by Chance found out by some inquisitive Traveller, the Whole is now become only a confus'd Heap of Rubbish, according to the Word of God, by the same Prophet; (e) I will roll thee down from the Rocks, and make thee as a burnt Mountain, and they shall not take of thee a Stone for a Corner, nor a Stone for Foundations, but thou shalt be an everlasting Desolation, saith the Lord.*

(e) Jer. li. 25, 26.

From Gen. xi.  
to Ver. 10.



### CHAP. III.

*Of the Dispersion, and first Settlement of the Nations.*

### The HISTORY.

A. M.  
1759, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
2245, &c.

The Settlement  
of the Sons of  
Japhet.

IN what Manner the Children of Noah were admitted to the Possession of the several Countries, they afterwards came to inhabit, the *Sacred Historian* has not inform'd us; but this we may depend on, that (a) this great Division of the Earth was not the Result of Chance, but of mature Deliberation; not a confus'd, irregular Dispersion, wherein every one went where he pleas'd, and settled himself where he lik'd best, but a proper Assignment of such and such Places, for every Division and Subdivision of each Nation and Family to dwell in. Japhet, as we said before, though usually mention'd last, yet was, in

Reality, the *eldest* Son of Noah, and, accordingly, has his Descendants here plac'd in the Front of the Genealogy. He had † seven Sons: Gomer, who seated himself in Phrygia; Magog, in Scythia; Media, in Media; Javan, in Ionia, or Part of Greece; Tubal, in Tibarene; Masbech, in Moschia, (which lies in the North-East Parts of Cappadocia) and Tiras, in Thrace, Myschia, and the rest of Europe towards the North.

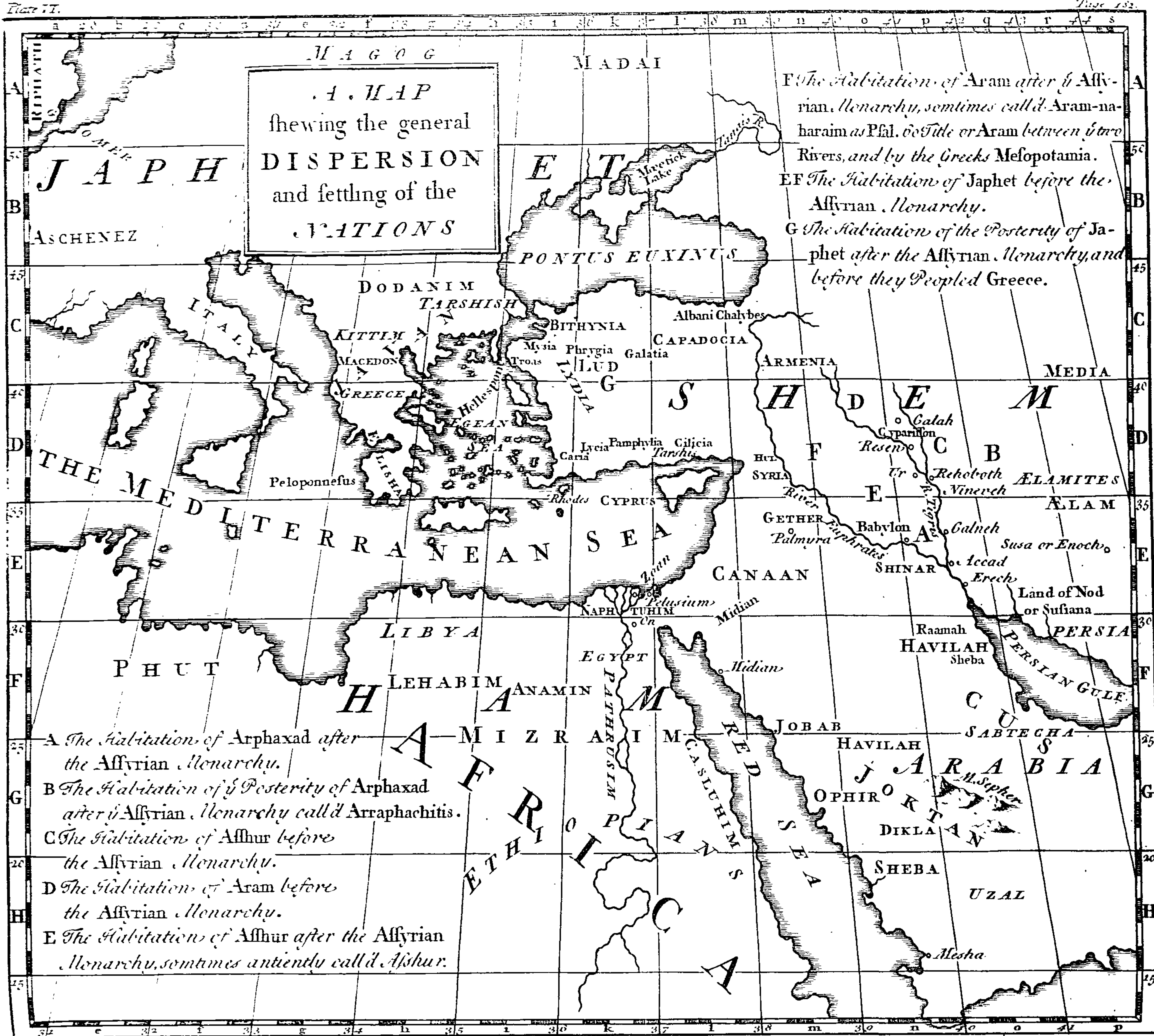
THE Sons of Gomer were Askanax, who took Possession of Ascania, (which is Part of Lesser Phrygia) Riphah, of the Riphæan

From Gen. x.  
to the End;  
and from Ch.  
xi. Ver. 10.  
to the End.

(a) Mede's Disc. 49, 50. l. 1.

† The following Account of the Plantations of the three Sons of Noah and their Descendants, is extracted from Bochart's Phaleg, Heidegger's Historia Patriarcharum, Vol. I. Exercit. 22. Wells's Sacred Geography, Vol. I. Bedford's Scripture Chronology, l. 2. Shuckford's Connection, Vol. I. Parker's Bibliotheca Biblica, Vol. I. the Authors of the Universal History, l. 1. Le Clerc and Patrick's Commentaries, Pool and Ainsworth's Annotations, with other Authors of the like Nature; from whom we have made use of the most probable Conjectures, and to whom we refer the Reader, rather than encumber him with a Multitude of explanatory Notes.







A. M.  
1759, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
2245, &c.

*Riphaean Mountains; and Togarmah, of Part of Cappadocia, and Galatia.*

THE Sons of Javan were *Elishah*, who seated himself in *Peloponnesus*; *Tarshish*, in *Spain*; *Kittim*, in *Italy*; and *Dodanim*, (*b*) (otherwise call'd *Rhodanim*) in *France*, not far from the Banks of the River *Rhone*, to which he seems to have given the Name. By these, and the Colonies, which, in some Space of Time, proceeded from them, not only a considerable Part of *Asia*, but all *Europe*, and the Islands adjacent, were stock'd with Inhabitants; and the several Inhabitants were so settled and dispos'd of, that each Tribe or Family, who spake the same Language, kept together in one Body, and (how distant soever in their Situation) continu'd, for some Time at least, their Relation to the People, or Nation, from whom *originally* they sprang.

Of Shem.

*SHEM*, the second Son of *Noah* (and from whom the *Hebrew* Nation did descend) had himself five Sons; whereof *Elam* took Possession of a Country in *Persia*, called after himself at first, but, in the Time of *Daniel*, it obtain'd the Name of *Susiana*; *Assur*, of *Assyria*; *Arphaxad*, of *Chaldea*; *Lud*, of *Lydia*; and *Aram*, of *Syria*, as far as the *Mediterranean* Sea.

THE Sons of *Aram* were *Uz*, who seated himself in the Country of *Damascus*; *Hull*, near *Cholobatene* in *Armenia*; *Mash*, near the Mountain *Mafius*; and *Gether*, in Part of *Mesopotamia*.

*ARPHAXAD* had a Son nam'd *Salah*, who settled near *Susiana*, and begat *Eber* (the Father of the *Hebrew* Nation) who had likewise two Sons; *Peleg*, whose Name imports *Division*, because, in his Days, Mankind was divided into several Colonies; and *Jocktan*, who had a large Offspring, to the Number of thirteen Sons, all seated in *Arabia Felix*, and who, in all Probability, were the Progenitors of such People and Nations, as, in those Parts, in after Ages, had some Affinity to their several Names. For here it was, that the *Allumavotæ*, who took their Name from *Almodad*, the *Selapeni*, from *Sheleph*, and the *Abaliteæ*, from *Obal*, &c.

liv'd, viz. from that Part of *Arabia*, which lies between *Musa*, (a famous Sea-Port in the *Red-Sea*) and the Mountain *Climax*, which was formerly call'd *Se-phar*, from a City of that Name, built at the Bottom of it, and then the *Metropolis* of the whole Country.

From Gen. x. to the End; and from Ch. xi. Ver. 10. to the End.

*HAM*, the youngest Son of *Noah*, had four Sons; whereof *Cush* settled his Abode in that Part of *Arabia*, which lies towards *Egypt*; *Mizraim*, in both *Upper* and *Lower* *Egypt*; *Phut*, in Part of *Lybia*, and *Canaan*, in the Land, which was afterwards call'd by his Name, and in other adjacent Countries.

And of Ham.

THE Sons of *Cush* were *Seba*, who settled on the South-West Part of *Arabia*; *Habilah*, who gave Name to a Country upon the River *Pison*, where it parts with *Euphrates*, to run into the *Arabian Gulf*; *Sabtab*, who liv'd on the same Shore (but a little more Northward) of the *Arabian Gulf*; *Raamah*, who, with his two Sons, *Sheba* and *Dedan*, occupied the same Coast, but a little more Eastward; and *Sabtechah*, who (we need not doubt) plac'd himself among the rest of his Brethren. But, among all the Sons of *Cush*, *Nimrod* was the Person, who, in these early Days, distinguish'd himself by his Bravery and Courage. His Lot chanc'd to fall into a Place, that was not a little infested with wild Beasts; and therefore he betook himself to the Exercise of Hunting, and, drawing together a Company of stout young Fellows, not only clear'd the Country of such dangerous Creatures, but, procuring himself likewise great Honour and Renown by his other Exploits, he rais'd himself at length to the Dignity of a *King*, (the first King that is suppos'd to have been in the World) and, having made *Babylon* the Seat of his Empire, laid the Foundation of three other Cities, viz. *Erech*, *Accad*, and *Calnech*, in the neighbouring Provinces; and so, passing into *Assyria*, and enlarging his Territories there, he built *Nineveh*, *Rebemoth*, *Calah*, and *Resen*, (which was afterwards call'd *Larissa*) situate upon the

(b) 1 Chron. i. 7.



A. M.  
1759. &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
2745. &c.

the *Tygris*. But to return to the Remainder of *Ham's* Posterity.

*MIZRAIM*, his second Son, became King of *Egypt*, which, after his Death, was divided into three Kingdoms by three of his Sons; *Ananim*, who was King of *Tanis*, or *Lower-Egypt*, call'd afterwards *Delta*; *Naphtulim*, who was King of *Naph*, or *Memphis*, in *Upper Egypt*; and *Pathrusim*, who set up the Kingdom of *Pathros*, or *Thebes*, in *Thebais*. *Ludim* and *Lehabim* peopled *Lybia*: *Cashubim* fix'd himself at *Cashiotis*, in the Entrance of *Egypt* from *Palestine*; and, having two Sons, *Philistim* and *Caphterim*, the latter he left to succeed him at *Cashiotis*, and the former planted the Country of the *Philistines*, between the Borders of *Canaan* and the *Mediterranean-Sea*. The Sons of *Canaan* were *Sidon*, the Father of the *Sidonians*, who liv'd in *Phœnicia*; *Heth*, the Father of the *Hittites*, who liv'd near *Hebron*; *Emor*, the Father of the *Amorites*, who liv'd in the Mountains of *Judæa*; and *Arvad*, the Father of the *Arvadites*, not far from *Sidon*: But whether the other Sons of *Canaan* settled in this Country, cannot be determin'd with any Certainty and Exactness; only we must take Care to place them somewhere between *Sidon*, and *Gerar*, and *Admah*, and *Zeboim*; for these were the Boundaries of their Land.

UPON the whole then we may observe, that the Posterity of *Japhet* came into the Possession, not only of all *Europe*, but of a considerable Portion of *Asia*: (c) For two of his Sons, *Tiras* and *Javan*, together with their Descendants, had all those Countries, which, from the *Mediterranean-Sea*, reach as far as *Scandinavia Northward*; and his other Sons, from the *Mediterranean*, extended themselves *Eastward* over almost all *Asia Minor*, and Part of *Armenia*, over *Media*, *Iberia*, *Albania*, and those vast Regions towards the *North*, where formerly the *Scythians*, but now the *Tartars*, dwell: That the Posterity of

*Ham* held in their Possession all *Africa*, and no small Part of *Asia*; (d) *Mizraim*, both the *Upper*, *Lower*, and *Middle Egypt*, *Marmarica*, and *Ethiopia*, both East and West; *Phut*, the Remainder of *Africa*, *Lybia*, *Interior* and *Exterior*, *Numidia*, *Mauritania*, *Getulia*, &c. *Cush*, all *Arabia*, that lies between the *Red-Sea* and the Gulf, beyond the Gulf, *Carmania*, and no small Part of *Persia*, and towards the North of *Arabia*, (till expell'd by *Nimrod*) *Babylonia*, and Part of *Chaldæa*: And *Canaan*, *Palestine*, *Phœnicia*, Part of *Cappadocia*, and that large Tract of Ground along the *Euxine-Sea*, even as far as *Colchis*: And that the Posterity of *Shem*, had in their Possession Part both of the *Greater* and *Lesser Asia*; (e) in the *Lesser*, *Lydia*, *Mysia*, and *Cares*; and in the *Greater*, *Assyria*, *Syria*, *Mesopotamia*, *Armenia*, *Sufiana*, *Arabia Felix*, &c. and perhaps *Eastward*, all the Countries, as far as *China*.

THESE are the Plantations (f) of the Families of the Sons of Noah, in their Generations, and after this Manner were the Nations divided in the Earth after the Flood. And now to descend to a more particular Account of the Posterity of his Son *Shem*, from whom the *Hebrews*, (who are the proper Subjects of our History) were descended.

TWO Years after the Flood, when A. M. 1658: *Shem* was 100 Years old, he had a Son nam'd *Arphaxad*; after which Time, he liv'd 500 Years; so that the whole of his Life was 600.

ARPHAXAD, when 35, had a Son A. M. 1693: nam'd *Salah*; after which he liv'd 403; in all 438.

SALAH, when 30, had a Son nam'd A. M. 1723: *Eber*, (from whom his Descendants were call'd *Hebrews*) after which he liv'd 403 Years; in all 433.

EBER, when 34, had a Son nam'd Pe- A. M. 1757: leg, in whose Time (as we said) the Earth came to be divided; after which he liv'd 430 Years; in all 464.

PELEG,

(c) *Hillegger's Hist. Patriar. Vol. I. Exercit. 22. Sect. 1.*  
(f) *Gen. x. 32.*

(d) *Ibid. Sect. 2.*

(e) *Ibid. Sect. 3.*

From *Gen. x.*  
to the End;  
and from *Ch.*  
*xi. Ver. 10.*  
to the End.



A. M. 1759. *Æt. c.*  
Ant. Christ. 2245. *Æt. c.*  
PELEG, when 30, had a Son nam'd *Reu*, after which he liv'd 209 Years; in all 239.

A. M. 1787.  
A. M. 1819.  
REU, when 32, had a Son nam'd *Serug*; after which he liv'd 207 Years; in all 239.

A. M. 1849.  
SERUG, when 30, had a Son nam'd *Nabor*; after which he liv'd 200 Years; in all 230.

A. M. 1878.  
NAHOR, when 29, had a Son nam'd *Terah*; after which he liv'd 119 Years; in all 148. But of all these Persons, it must be remark'd, that they had several other Children of both Sexes, tho' not recorded in this History.

A. M. 1948.  
TERAH, when 70, (for he was not bless'd with Children sooner) had three Sons, one after another, *Abram*, *Nabor*, and *Haran*; whereof *Haran*, the eldest, died before his Father, in his native Country of *Ur*, leaving behind him one Son, whose Name was *Lot*, and two Daughters, whereof the Elder, *viz.* *Milcab*, was marry'd to her Uncle *Nabor*, and the Younger, († whose Name was *Sarai*) was marry'd to her Uncle *Abram*; but, at this Time, she was barren, and had no Children.

THE Corruption of Mankind was now become general; and *Idolatry* and *Polytheism* began to spread like a Contagion, \* the People of *Ur*, in particular, (g) (as is suppos'd by the Signification of the Name) worshipp'd the Element of Fire, which was always thought a proper *Symbol* of the *Sun*, that universal God of the *East*. *Terah*, the Father of *Abram*, (h) was certainly a Companion (some say a Priest) of those, who ador'd such *strange Gods*; nor was *Abram* himself (as 'tis generally imagin'd) uninfected. But God, being minded to select this Family out of the rest of Mankind, and in them to establish his Church, order'd *Terah* to leave the Place of his Habitation, which was then corrupted in this Manner, which, accordingly, he did, and taking with him his Son *Abram* and his Wife, together with his Grandson *Lot*, left *Ur*, with an Intent to go into *Canaan*; but, in his Journey, fell sick at \* *Haran*, a City of *Mesopotamia*, where being forc'd to make his Abode for some Time, || in the 145th Year of his Age he there died.

From Gen. x. to the End; and from Ch. xi. Ver. 10. to the End.  
A. M. 1997.

† 'Tis very probable, that *Sarai* was call'd *Isah*, before she left *Ur*; because, in the 29th Verse, we read that *Haran* had a Daughter of that Name, and yet we cannot suppose, but that, had she been a distinct Person, *Moses* would have given us an Account of her Descent, because it so much concern'd his Nation to know from whom they came both by the Father and Mother's Side. *Patrick's Commentary*.

\* The City of *Ur* was in *Chaldee*, as the Scripture assure us in more Places than one; but still its true Situation is not so well known. For some think it to be the same as *Camarina* in *Babylonia*; others confound it with *Orcha*, or *Orche*, or *Chaldea*; while others again take it to be *Ura*, or *Sura*, upon the Banks of the River *Euphrates*. *Bochart* and *Grotius* maintain, that it is *Ura*, in the Eastern Part of *Mesopotamia*, which was sometimes (as it appears from *Acts* vii. 2, 4.) included under the Name *Chaldea*; and this Situation seems the more probable, not only because it agrees with the Words of *St Stephen* in the above-cited Place, but with the Writings of *Ammianus Marcellinus* likewise, who himself travell'd this Country, and mentions a City of this Name, in the Place, where *Bochart* supposes it, about two Days Journey from *Nisibis*. *Well's Geography*, Vol. I.

(g) Vid. *Calmet's Dictionary* on the Word *Ur*.

(h) *Jos.* xxiv. 2, 14.

\* *Haran*, which is likewise call'd *Charan*, according to the *Hebrew*, and *Charran*, according to the *Greek* Pronunciation, was a City situated in the *West*, or *North-West* Part of *Mesopotamia*, on a River of the same Name, which very probably runs into the River *Chaboras*, as that does into the *Euphrates*. It is taken Notice of by *Latin* Writers, on Account of the great Overthrow, which the *Parthians* gave the *Roman* Army, under the Command of *Craffus*, and, as some think, had its Name given by *Terah*, in Memory of *Haran*, his deceas'd Son. But others think it is much better deriv'd from the Word *Ilbarar*, which denotes its Soil to be *hot* and *adust*, as it appears to be from a Passage out of *Plutarch*, in the Life of *Craffus*, and several other antient Testimonies. Vid. *Calmet's Dictionary*, *Well's Geography*, and *Le Clerc's Commentary in Locum*.

|| *St Stephen* (in *Acts* vii. 4.) tells us, that after the Death of his Father, *Abraham* remov'd from *Haran*, or, as he calls it, *Charran*, to the Land of *Canaan*. In *Gen.* xii. 4. we are told, that *Abram* was *seventy five Years old*, when he departed out of *Charran*. In *Gen.* xi. 26. it is said, that *Terah* was *seventy Years old*, when he begat *Abram*; and yet, in *ver.* 32. of the same Chapter, it is affirm'd, that he died, being *two hundred and five Years old*. But, at this Rate, *Terah* must have liv'd sixty Years after *Abraham's* going from *Haran*: For 75, (the Number of *Abram's* Years, when he left *Haran*) being added to 70, the Number of *Terah's* Years, when he begat *Abram*, make 145 Years only; whereas the Account in *Genesis* is, that he liv'd 205. This therefore must certainly proceed from a Fault crept into the Text of *Moses*; because of the two hundred and five Years, which are given to *Terah*, when he died at *Haran*, he only liv'd an hundred and forty-five, according to the *Samaritan* Version, and the *Samaritan* Chronicle, which, without Doubt, do agree with the *Hebrew* Copy, from which they were translated. *An Essay for a New Translation*.



A. M.  
1997, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
2007, &c.

## The OBJECTION.

From Gen. x.  
to the End;  
and from Ch.  
xi. Ver. 10.  
to the End.

“ **B**UT how well soever we may  
“ think it comports with the Cha-  
“ racter of a good Historian, to entertain  
“ us with a dry *Catalogue* of Names, and  
“ of Names which never once more ap-  
“ pear upon the Stage of Action; to tell  
“ us, that such an one, at such a Time,  
“ begat such an one, and then died, aged  
“ so and so, without entering any further  
“ into his Story, or acquainting us with  
“ one Tittle of the Transactions of his  
“ Life; yet sure we cannot think, that  
“ his Account of the *Origin* of Nations,  
“ or the Plantation of Mankind over the  
“ Face of the Earth, can be either ratio-  
“ nal, or consistent. In little more than  
“ the Space of an hundred Years, to sup-  
“ pose Mankind so far increas’d, as to be  
“ able to send out Colonies, from the  
“ Center of their Dispersion, to all the  
“ Parts of the then-known World, is  
“ somewhat unaccountable; but then to  
“ make *Infants*, mere Infants, or Persons,  
“ who perhaps, at that Time, were un-  
“ born, the *Chiefs* and *Leaders* of these  
“ Colonies; to give them Countries, which  
“ they never saw, and these Countries  
“ Names, which they never could deserve,  
“ is a Thing vastly absurd, and what ar-  
“ gues, at least, a strange Forgetfulness in  
“ our Author.

“ *PELEG*, for Instance, could not  
“ have been long born, and *Jocktan*, his  
“ younger Brother, (much more *Jocktan*’s  
“ Sons) can scarce be suppos’d to have  
“ been born, when the Dispersion hap-  
“ pen’d; and yet they are represented  
“ both as *Heads*, and *Princes* of Families;  
“ one conducting his People to † the  
“ Southern Parts of *Mesopotamia*, and  
“ the other, with his numerous Family,  
“ taking Possession of † a good Share of

“ *Arabia Fœlix*. And whereas it is said  
“ of the Sons of *Japhet*, that, by them  
“ were the *Isles* of the Gentiles divided in-  
“ to their Lands, ’tis manifest, from the  
“ Account of *Moses* himself, that the  
“ Places, which he assigns for their Habi-  
“ tation, were all upon the Continent;  
“ nor were the Islands of *Europe* peopled,  
“ till many Generations, after this *Period*,  
“ were pass’d and gone.

“ THE Design of *Moses*, no doubt, is  
“ to evince, that all the present Inha-  
“ bitants of the World descended origi-  
“ nally from the three Sons of *Noah*;  
“ but, besides the great Difficulty of set-  
“ tling the several Nations in any tole-  
“ rable Manner, according to the *Char-  
“ tel*, which he has given us, there must  
“ of Necessity have been People in the  
“ World, either escap’d from the Flood,  
“ or *Self-originated*, before this *Æra* of  
“ their Dispersion.

“ BETWEEN the Flood and this Dis-  
“ persion, the Space is little more than  
“ a hundred Years: *Ninus* is plac’d by  
“ many *Chronologers* in this first Century:  
“ But suppose him considerably later, he  
“ is far from being the first Founder of  
“ the *Assyrian* Monarchy. *Belus* preced-  
“ ed him, and several Kings there were  
“ before *Belus*: But now, how can this  
“ agree with the Propagation of Mankind  
“ from the Sons of *Noah*? Some petty  
“ States might perhaps be erected; but it  
“ is impossible to conceive, that the Foun-  
“ dation of so great an Empire shou’d be  
“ laid, in so small a Compass of Time, by  
“ the Posterity of three Persons.

“ THE Records, and *astronomical* Ob-  
“ servations of some Countries, reach-  
“ ing much lower than the *Mosaick* Date  
“ of the Flood; the History of *China*,  
“ and

† It is not unlikely, that either *Peleg*, or some of his Posterity gave Name to a Town upon *Euphrates*, call’d *Phalga*, not far from the Place, where the River *Chaboras* runs into it. *Patrick’s* Comment.

† The *Arabians*, ’tis certain, do avowedly derive their Original from *Jocktan*, and herein they may as well be credited, as the *Europeans*, who pretend to be sprung from *Japhet*, or *Japhet*; or the *Africans*, who will have *Ham*, or *Jupiter-Hammon*, for their Founder. There is moreover, in the Territories of *Mecca*, a City, which, even to this Day, is called *Baisab-Jecktan*, i. e. the Seat and Habitation of *Jecktan*, very remarkable for the Elegancy of its Buildings, the Pleasure of its Situation, and Plenty of its Fountains. *Patrick*, and *Le Clerc’s* Comment.



A. M.  
1997, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
2007, &c.

“ and the State and Grandeur of other  
“ *Eastern Nations*, in Times as antient,  
“ as any mention’d in *profane History*, to-  
“ gether with the *Maturity* of *civil* Dif-  
“ cipline, and Government, of Learning  
“ and Inventions of all Kinds, before ever  
“ *Greece* or *Italy*, or any other *Western*  
“ People, grew to be at all considerable,  
“ are a sufficient Argument that these Peo-  
“ ple were no Descendants of *Noah*; or,  
“ that if they were, that there must be a  
“ gross Mistake in Point of Computation.  
“ For (to take one Argument more from  
“ *Moses* himself) from the Flood to the  
“ Time of *Abraham* (according to the  
“ *Hebrew Account*) were much about 305  
“ Years; and yet, in that Patriarch’s  
“ Days, the World was so well replenish’d  
“ and Dominions so well establish’d, that  
“ we read of several Kings encountering  
“ one another; by which it is evident,  
“ that the Earth had been peopled some  
“ Time before, or otherwise there cou’d  
“ not have been such potent Princes, as  
“ some of them are represented to be at  
“ that Time.

“ THE Difficulties then, in the *Mo-*  
“ *saick Account*, of the *Origin* of Na-  
“ tions, being so many, and so insuperable,  
“ it may not perhaps be deem’d so absurd  
“ a Thing, that several other Nations  
“ (as well as the *Greeks* and *Egyptians*)  
“ have own’d no Founder, but profess’d  
“ themselves *Aborigines*, or the first In-  
“ habitants of the Countries, where they  
“ liv’d. And without some such Suppo-  
“ sition, what can we say for the Natives  
“ of *America*, a large *Continent*, which  
“ *Moses* makes no Mention of, and yet,  
“ upon its first Discovery, was found  
“ stock’d with a competent Number of  
“ Inhabitants, though it apparently has no  
“ Connection, and, consequently, could  
“ have no Communication, with any other  
“ Parts of the Globe? Who was their  
“ great Progenitor? What *Chief*, of all  
“ the Race of *Noah*, first discover’d the  
“ Passages, that have ever since been lost,  
“ and carry’d a Colony into this *New*

“ *World*, which could, none of them,  
“ find their Way back again? These Que-  
“ stions we expect to be resolv’d in, or  
“ otherwise we may be permitted to con-  
“ clude, that the Inhabitants of this Part  
“ of the World had better Fate than those  
“ of the other, in escaping the Rage of  
“ the Waters, and so surviving the *Flood*.”

IT may seem not a little strange to  
some perhaps, why *Moses*, in his Account  
of the Times, both preceding and subse-  
quent to the Flood, should be so particu-  
lar in setting down the *Genealogies* of  
the Patriarchs; but he, who considers,  
that this was the common Method of re-  
cording History in those Days, will soon  
perceive, that he had Reason sufficient for  
what he did, namely, to give Content  
and Satisfaction to the Age, wherein he  
wrote. We indeed, according to the pre-  
sent Taste, think these *Genealogies* but  
heavy Reading; nor are we at all con-  
cern’d who begat whom, in a Period, that  
stands at so distant a Prospect; but the  
People, for whom *Moses* wrote, had the  
Things either before their Eyes, or recent  
in their Memories. They saw a great  
Variety of Nations around them, different  
in their Manners and Customs, as well as  
their Denominations. The Names where-  
by they were then called, were not to  
them so antique and obsolete, as they are  
to us. They knew their Meaning, and  
were acquainted with their Derivation.  
And therefore it was no small Pleasure to  
them, to observe, as they read along, the  
gradual Increase of Mankind; how the  
*Stem* of *Noah* spread itself into *Branches*  
almost innumerable, and how, from such  
and such a Progenitor, such and such a  
Nation, whose History and Adventures  
they were no Strangers to, did arise. Nor  
can it be less than some Satisfaction to us,  
even at this mighty Distance, to perceive,  
that, after so many Ages, the Change of  
*Languages*, and the Alteration of Names,  
brought in by Variety of *Conquests*, we are  
still able to trace the Footsteps of the  
Names recorded by *Moses*; by the Help  
of

From Gen. x.  
to the End;  
and from Ch.  
xi. Ver. 10.  
to the End.

Answer’d by  
showing why  
*Moses* sets  
down *Genea-*  
*logies*.



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of these can \* discover those antient Nations, which descended from them, and, with a little Care and Application, the particular Regions, which they once inhabited; whereof the best *Heathen Geographers*, without the Assistance of these sacred Records, were never in a Capacity so much as to give us a tolerable Guess.

BUT there is a farther Reason for our *Historian's* writing in this Manner. God had promis'd to *Adam*, and; in him, to all his Posterity, a *Restoration* in the Person of the *Messiah*. This Promise was renew'd to (i) *Noah*, and afterwards confirm'd to *Abraham*, the great Founder of the *Jewish* Nation. FIt therefore it was, in this Regard, that he should record exact *Genealogies*, and that all other sacred *Historians* shou'd successively do the same: Nor can we sufficiently admire the Divine Wisdom, in settling such a Method, in the Beginning of the World, by *Moses*, and carrying it on by the Prophets, as might be of general Use, as long as the World shou'd last. For, as the Expectation of the *Messiah* put the *Jews* upon keeping an exact Account of all their *Genealogies*; so when *Christ* came into the World, it was evident, beyond Dispute, that he was of the *Seed* of *Abraham*, of the *Tribe* of *Judah*, and of the Lineage of *David*, according to the Promises, which had, from Time to Time, been recorded of him.

IT is well worth our Observation however, that, in the Catalogue, which *Moses* gives us of the Descendants of *Noah*, he makes Mention of no more than sixteen

Sons of the three Brothers, or principal Founders of so many *original* Nations; nor of any more than *seven* of these sixteen, of whom it is recorded, that they had any Children; and even of these seven, there is *one* (we may observe) whose Children are not number'd. (k) But it is not to be imagin'd, that in two or three hundred Years, upon a *moderate* Calculation, or even but in an hundred Years, at the *lowest* Account, *Noah* shou'd have had no more than sixteen Grandsons, and that, of these too, the Majority shou'd go childless to the Grave: It is much more likely, or rather self-evident, that the nine Grandsons, of whom we find nothing in Scripture, were nevertheless Fathers of Nations, as well as any of the rest, and not only of *original* Nations, call'd after their Names, but of lesser and *subordinate* Tribes, call'd after their Sons Names: And (what makes the Amount to seem much less) there is Reason to suppose, that how many soever the Grandchildren of *Noah* were, we have, in this tenth Chapter of *Genesis*, the Names of those only, who were *Patriarchs* of great Nations, and only of such Nations, as were, in the Days of *Moses*, known to the *Hebrews*. For, if we read it attentively, we shall perceive, (l) that the Design of the holy Penman, is not to present us with an exact Enumeration of all *Noah's* Descendants, (which wou'd have been infinite) no, nor to determine who were the leading Men above all the rest; but only to give us a *Catalogue*, or general Account, of the Names of some certain Persons, descended of each of *Noah's* Children,

From Gen. x. to the End; and from Ch. xi. Ver. 10. to the End.

That the Heads of all the Nations, then existing, are not set down.

\* Those, who have undertaken to give us an Account of the several Countries assign'd to *Noah's* Posterity, have laid down certain Rules, as *Landmarks*, to direct our Enquiry into the Original of each particular Nation. They tell us, that wherever we find the Scripture assigning any Portion, or Tract of Land, to any Branch of *Noah's* Posterity, we may rest assur'd, that that particular Branch, or, at least, the major Part of it, settled itself there; That the Families, or Tribes of any Nation are continually rank'd in that Nation; so that, wherever we find the Nation, there we may expect to find the Family likewise; unless there be apparent Evidence of their Transplantation: That, when two, or more of these Nations are mention'd together, 'tis highly probable, that they were either both seated together, or lay in a very near Neighbourhood to each other: That, when two Nations or Tribes happen to be incorporated into one, the Name of one of them is generally swallow'd up by the other, and always goes along with the *greater*: That all *original* Plantations ought to be sought for within a reasonable Compass of Earth, from the *Center* of their Dispersion, from whence they might, in Colonies, afterwards extend themselves into still remoter Parts: That the Origin of Nations, and their Cognation and Affinity to one another, are to be judg'd of by the Agreement of Languages, the Reminders of antient Names, the History of Nations, monumental Inscriptions, and a Conformity of Manners and Customs; and that lastly, according to these *Criteria*, we shall find, that the Race of *Shem*, settled chiefly in *Asia*; those of *Ham*, Part in *Asia*, and Part in *Africa*; and the greater Part of those of *Japhet* in *Europe*; so that *Shem* was situate in the *East*, with *Japhet* on the *North*, and *Ham* on the *South*.

(i) Vid. Bp Sherlock's Use and Intent of Prophecy. *Jord's* Connect. 1. 3.

(k) Biblioth. Bibl. Vol. I. Occas. Annot. 17.

(l) Shuck-



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dren, who became famous in their Generations; and so pass them by, as having not Space enough in his History to pursue them more minutely. For we may observe, that the constant Practice of our Author (as it is indeed of all other good Authors) is to cut Things short, that do not properly relate to his Purpose; and, when he is hastening to his main Point, to mention *cursorily* such Persons, as were remarkable (though not the Subject he is to handle) in the Times whereof he treats.

THUS, in the *Entrance* of his History, his Business was to attend to the Line of *Seth*, and therefore, when he comes to mention the opposite Family of *Cain*, (*m*) he only reckons up *eight* of them, and these the rather, because they were the real *Inventors* of some particular Arts, which the *Egyptians* vainly laid claim to. And, in like Manner, when he comes to the Life of *Isaac*, *Jacob's* was the next Line, wherein his History was to run, and therefore he contents himself with giving us a Catalogue of some of *Esau's* Race, but such of them only, as were, in After-Ages, (*n*) *the Dukes of Edom, according to their Habitations, in the Land of their Possession*, as he expresses it. Unless therefore, we wou'd desire it in an Author, that he should be luxuriant, and run wild, we cannot, with any Colour of Reason, blame the Divine Historian for stopping short upon proper Occasions; for had he pursued all the Families, descended from *Noah*, into their several Plantations, and there given us the History of all their various Adventures, *the World*, we may almost say, *wou'd not have contain'd the Books*, which he must have written.

WHAT Grounds there may be for the Supposition, I cannot tell; but to me there seems to be no Reason, why we shou'd be oblig'd to maintain, that all the Parts of the habitable World were peopled at once, immediately after the Confusion of Languages. The Historian, indeed, speaking of the Persons he had just enumerated, gives us to know, that (*o*) *by these were*

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*the Nations divided after the Flood*; but how long after the Flood, he does not intimate: So that there is no Occasion to understand the Words, as tho' he meant, that, either by *these only*, or by *these immediately*, or by *these all at once*, was the Earth replenish'd; but only, that among others (*unmention'd*, because not so well known to the *Jews*) there were so many Persons of Figure, descended from the Sons of *Noah*, who, some at one Time, and some at another, became Heads of Nations, and had, by their Descendants, Countries call'd after their Names; so that, (*p*) by them the *Nations were divided*, i. e. People were broken into different Nations *on the Earth*, not all at once, or immediately upon the Confusion, but at several Times, as their Families increas'd and separated *after the Flood*.

FOR, considering that the Number of Mankind was then *comparatively small*; and the Distance of Countries, from the Place of their Dispersion, *immensely wide*; 'tis more reasonable to think, that these several Plantations were made at different Times, and by a gradual Progression. *Moses* indeed informs us, that the Earth was portioned out among the Children of *Noah*, *after their Tongues*: Supposing then, that the Number of Languages was, according to the Number of the Heads of Nations, *sixteen*, these sixteen Companies issu'd out of *Babel* at separate Times, and by separate Routs, and so took Possession of the next adjacent Country, whereunto they were to go. Here they had not settled long, before the daily Increase of the People made the Bounds of their Habitation too narrow; whereupon the succeeding Generation, under the Conduct of some other Leader, leaving the Place in Possession of such, as car'd not to move, penetrated farther into the Country, and there settling again, and again becoming too numerous, sent forth fresh Colonies into the Places, they found unoccupy'd; till, by this Way of Progression on each Side, from the Center to every Point of the *Circumference*,

T t t

From Gen. x.  
to the End;  
and from Ch.  
xi. Ver. 10.  
to the End.

The World  
peopled gra-  
dually.

(m) Gen. iv.

(n) Ch. xxxvi. 43.

(o) Ch. x. 32.

(p) *Shuckford's Connection*, Vol. I. l. 3.



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From Gen. x.  
to the End;  
and from Ch.  
xi. Ver. 10.  
to the End.

ference, the whole World came in Time to be inhabited, in the Manner that we now find it. If then the several Parts of the Globe were, by the Sons of *Noah*, gradually, and, at sundry Times, peopled, there wanted not, all at once, *so many*; and if several of the Sons of *Noah*, who had their Share in peopling the Globe, are not taken notice of by *Moses*, there might possibly be *many more* to plant and replenish the Earth, than we are aware of. Let us then see what their Number, upon a moderate Computation, might, at this Time, be suppos'd to be.

What the  
Number of  
the People,  
then in the  
World, might  
possibly be.

To this Purpose we are to remember, that we are not to make our Computation according to the present Standard of human Life, which, \* since the Time of the Flood, is vastly abbreviated; that the Strength of Constitution, necessary to the Procreation of Children, which, by a continu'd Course of Temperance, and Simplicity of Diet, then prevail'd, is now, by an Induction of all Manner of Riot and Excess, sadly impair'd; and that the Divine *Benediction*, which, in a particular

Manner, was then pour'd out upon the Children of *Noah*, cou'd not but prove effectual to the more than ordinary Multiplication of Mankind; so that Length of Days, assisted by the Blessing of God, and attended with a confirm'd State of Health, cou'd not but make a manifestly great Difference between their Case and ours.

\* VARIOUS are the Ways, which have been attempted by learned Men, to shew the probable Increase of Mankind, in that Period of Time: But, for our present Purpose, it will be sufficient to suppose (*q*) that the first three Couples, *i. e.* *Noah's* three Sons, and their Wives, in twenty Years Time after the Flood, might have thirty *Pair*, and, by a gradual Increase of ten *Pair* for each Couple in forty Years Time, till the three hundred and fortieth Year after the Flood, in which *Peleg* died, there might rise a sufficient Number (\* as appears by the Table under the Page) to spread Colonies over the Face of the whole Earth. And if to these, the several *Collateral* Descents of *Noah's* Posterity were taken

\* In the *Mosaick* History we find, by what Degrees, the long Lives, which preceded the Flood, were, after it, shorten'd. The first three Generations, recorded in Scripture, after the Deluge, *Arphaxad*, *Salah*, and *Heber*, lived above 430 Years; yet, not so long as their Ancestor *Shem*, who being born 100 Years before the Flood, liv'd above 500 after it. The three next Generations, *Peleg*, *Ren*, and *Scrug*, liv'd not much above 230 Years; and from their Time, only *Terah* liv'd above 200. All the others, after him, were below that Number. *Moses* came not to be above 120; and, in his Days, he complains, that the Age of Man was shorten'd to about *seventy* or *eighty* Years; and near this Standard it has continu'd ever since. *Miller's Church History*, p. 35.

\* *Petavius* [de Doct. Temp. l. 9. c. 14.] supposes, that the Posterity of *Noah* might beget Children at *seventeen*; that each of *Noah's* Sons might have *eight* Children, in eight Years after the Flood; and that every one of these eight might beget eight more; by this Means, in one Family (as in that of *Japhet*, 238 Years after the Flood) he makes a *Diagram*, consisting of almost an innumerable Company of Men. *Temporarius* (as the learned *Usher*, in his *Chron. Sacra*, Ch. 5. tells us) supposes, that all the Posterity of *Noah*, when they attain'd *twenty* Years of Age, had every Year *Twins*; and hereupon he undertakes to make it appear, that, in 102 Years after the Flood, there would be in all 1,534,400; but, without this Supposition of *Twins*, there wou'd, in that Time, be 388,605 Males, besides Females. Others suppose, that each of the Sons of *Noah* had ten Sons, and, by that Proportion, in a few Generations, the Amount will arise to many Thousands, within a *Century*: And others again insist on the Parallel between the Multiplication of the Children of *Israel* in *Egypt*, and thereupon compute, that, if from 72 Men, in the Space of 215 Years, there were procreated 600,000, how many will be born of three Men in the Space of an 100 Years. But, what Method soever we take to come to a probable Conjecture, we still have Cause to believe, that there was a more than ordinary Multiplication in the Posterity of *Noah* after the Flood. *Stillingfleet's Orig. Sacr.* l. 3. c. 4.

(*q*) Bishop *Cumberland's* Origines Gentium, Tract. 4. and *Millar's Church History*, Ch. I. Part 2.

* Years of the World.	Years after the Flood.	Pairs of Men and Women.
1676	20	30
1716	60	300
1756	100	3,000
1796	140	30,000
1836	180	300,000
1876	220	3,000,000
1916	260	30,000,000
1956	300	300,000,000
1996	340	3,000,000,000



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taken in; if the Children, which *Noah* himself might possibly have, in the 350 Years, he liv'd after the Flood; which *Shem*, and his two Brothers, might have, in the last 160; which *Salah*, and his Contemporaries, might have, in the last 160; and which *Heber*, and his Contemporaries, might have, in the last 191 Years of their Lives, (which are not reckon'd in the Account) together with the many more Grandsons of *Noah* and their Progeny, which, in all Probability (as we observ'd before) are not so much as mention'd in it; 'tis not to be imagin'd, how much these Additions will swell the Number of Mankind, to a prodigious Amount above the ordinary Calculation.

That Kingdoms at this Time were but small.

BUT, allowing the Number, at this Time, to be not near so large, as even the common Computation makes it; yet we are to remember, that, at the first planting of any Country, an Handful of Men (as it were) took up a large Tract of Ground. (r) At their first Division, they were scatter'd into smaller Bodies, and seated themselves at a considerable Distance from one another, the better to prevent the Increase of the Beasts of the Field upon them. These small Companies had each of them one Governor, who, in *Edom*, seems to be call'd (s) a Duke, and in *Canaan*, (t) a King (whereof there were no less, in that small Country, than one and thirty at one Time): But of what Power, or military Force, these several Princes were, we may learn from this one Passage in *Abraham's* Life, viz. that (u) when *Chedorlaomer*, in Conjunction with three other Kings, had defeated the Kings of *Sodom* and *Gomorrab*, with three Kings more, that came to their Assistance, plunder'd their Country, and taken away *Lot* and his Family, who, at this Time, sojourn'd in these Parts; *Abraham*, with no more than 318 of his own *Domesticks*, pursues the Conquerors, engages them, beats them, and, together

with his Nephew *Lot*, and all his Substance, recovers the Spoil of the Country, which these confederate Kings were carrying away. A plain Proof this; one wou'd think, that this Multitude of Kings, which were now in the World, were titular; rather than real; and that they had none of them any great Number of Subjects under their Command. For though *Canaan* was certainly a very fruitful Land, and may therefore be presum'd to be better stor'd with Inhabitants, than any of its neighbouring Provinces; yet we find, that when *Abraham* and *Lot* first came into it, though (x) they had Flocks, and Herds, and Tents, that the Land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together; yet, as soon as they were separated, they found no Difficulty to settle, in any Part thereof, with the rest of its Inhabitants.

From Gen. x. to the End; and from Ch. xi. Ver. 10. to the End.

How great soever the Growth of the *Affyrian* Monarchy became at last, yet we have too little Certainty of the Time, when it began, ever to question, upon that Account, the Truth of the Propagation of the World by the Sons of *Noah*. *Ninus* (whom profane History generally accounts the first Founder of it) is plac'd, (y) by one of our greatest Chronologers, in the 2737 Year of the World, according to the *Hebrew* Computation; so that, living in the Time of the Judges, he is suppos'd to have been Contemporary with *Deborah*; but (z) others think this a Date much too early. *Nimrod*, we must allow, founded a Kingdom at *Babylon*, and perhaps extended it into *Affyria*; but this Kingdom was but of small Extent, if compar'd with the Empires which arose afterwards; and yet, had it been never so much greater, it cou'd not have been of any long Continuance, because the Custom, in those early Days, was, for the Father to divide his Territories among his Sons. After the Days of *Nimrod*, we hear no more in the sacred Records of the *Affyrian*

The Kingdom of Affyria in particular.

(r) Bedford's Script. Chron. l. i. c. 5.

(s) Gen. xxxvi. to the End.

(t) Jos. xii. 9. to the End.

(u) Gen. xiv.

(v) Gen. xiii. 5, 6.

(y) Usher's Annot. Vet. Test. A. M. 2737.

(z) Stillingfleet's

Orig. Sac. l. 3. c. 4. and Sir Isaac Newton's Chron.



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*Assyrian Empire*, till about the Year 3234; when we find *Pul* invading the Territories of *Israel*, and making *Menahem* tributary to him. 'Tis granted indeed, that the four Kings, who, in the Days of *Abraham*, invaded the Southern Coast of *Canaan*, came from the Countries, where *Nimrod* had reign'd, and perhaps were some of his Posterity, who had shar'd his Conquests; but of what small Significance such Kings as these were, we are just now come from relating. *Sesac*, and *Memnon*, two Kings of *Egypt*, were great Conquerors, and reign'd over *Chaldæa*, *Assyria*, and *Persia*; and yet, in all their Histories, there is not one Word of any Opposition, they receiv'd from the *Assyrian* Monarchy then standing: And, tho' *Nineveh*, in the Time of *Joash*, King of *Israel*, was become a large City; yet it had not yet acquir'd that Strength, as not to be afraid (according to the Preaching of *Jonah*) of being invaded by its Neighbours, and destroyed within forty Days. Not long before this, it had freed itself indeed from the Dominion of *Egypt*, and had got a King of its own, but (what is very remarkable) (a) its King was not, as yet, call'd the King of *Assyria*, but only (b) the King of *Nineveh*; nor was his Proclamation for a Fast publish'd in several Nations, no nor in all *Assyria*, but only in *Nineveh*, and perhaps the Villages adjacent: Whereas, when once they had establish'd their Dominion at Home, secur'd all *Assyria* properly so call'd, and began now to make War upon their neighbouring Nations, their Kings were no longer call'd the *Kings of Nineveh*, but began to assume the Title of the *Kings of Assyria*. These, and several more Instances, which the Author, I have just now cited, has produc'd, are sufficient Arguments to prove, that the *Assyrians* were not the great People, some have imagin'd, in the early Times of the World; and that, if they made any Figure in *Nimrod's* Days, it was all extinguish'd in the Reigns of

his Successors, and never reviv'd, until God, for the Punishment of the Wickedness of his own People, was pleas'd to raise them from Obscurity, and, as the Scripture expresses it, (c) *stirred up the Spirit of Pul, and the Spirit of Tiglath-Pileser, King of Assyria.*

AND in like Manner, we may observe, that, whatever Noise has been made in the World with the *astronomical Observations* of the *Chaldeans*, which *Aristotle* is said to have sent into *Greece*, and, according to which, *Alexander* is thought to have taken *Babylon*, the Whole is a mere Fiction and Romance. There is nothing extant (as (d) a very good Judge of *antient and modern Learning* tells us) in the *Chaldaick Astrology*, of older Date, than the *Æra* of *Nabonassar*, which begins but 747 Years before Christ. By this *Æra*, the *Chaldeans* computed their *astronomical Observations*, the first of which falls about the 27th Year of *Nabonassar*; and, all that we have of them, are only seven Eclipses of the Moon, and even these, but very coarsely set down, and the oldest not above 700 Years before Christ. And, to make short of the Matter, the same Author informs us farther, that the *Greeks* were the first practical *Astronomers*, who endeavour'd, in earnest, to make themselves *Masters of the Sciences*; that *Thales* was the first, who could predict an Eclipse in *Greece*, not 600 Years, and that *Hipparchus* made the first Catalogue of the fix'd Stars, not above 650 Years, before Christ.

WHAT the History of the *Egyptians*, and *Chinese*, and their boasted Antiquity, is, we have had Occasion to take notice (e) more than once, and need only here to add, that, bating that strange Affectation, wherein they both agree, of being thought so many thousand Years older, than they have any authentick Testimonies to produce; there is a manifest Analogy between the Scripture-History, and what *Berosus* has told us of the one, and *Martinius* of

From Gen. x. to the End; and from Ch. xi. Ver. 10. to the End.

That the Antiquity of the Astronomical Observations among the Chaldees is false.

And that the Histories of the Egyptians and Chinese accord with Moses.

(a) Sir Isaac Newton's Chronology, Ch. iii. Reflections, Ch. xxiii.

(b) Jonah. iii. (c) 1 Chron. v. 26. (d) Wotton's

(e) Vid. Apparatus, p. 43. and the History, l. i. c. 5.



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of the other : For (to refer the Reader to what we have observed from *Berosus* concerning the *Egyptians*) (*f*) the Genealogy, which the *Chinese* give us of the Family of their first Man, *Puoncuus*, seems to carry a near Resemblance to *Moses's* Patriarchal Genealogies ; *Thienhoang* their second King's civilizing the World, answers very well to *Seth's* settling the Principles, and reforming the Lives of Men ; and *Fobi's* fourth Successor, whom they accuse of destroying their ancient Religion, and introducing Idolatry, is plainly copy'd from the History of *Nimrod*, who was probably the first Establisher of Idol Worship. So that, from these, and some other Particulars in their History, we may be allow'd to conclude, that the antient *Chinese* (as all other Nations did) agreed, in the Main, with *Moses* in their Antiquities, and that the true Reason of their *Chronological* Difference is, that the Reigns of the *Chinese* Kings (in the very same Manner, as the *Egyptian Dynasties*) were not successive, (*g*) but of several *Contemporary* Princes, who, at one and the same Time, had different and distinct Dominions.

The wild Pretences of Self-Origination confuted.

THE Want of certain Records of ancient Times, and, consequently, the gross Ignorance, which some Nations labour'd under, as to their *Original*, has thrown several into a wild Notion and Conceit, that they were *Self-originated*, came never from any other Place, and had never any primordial Founder, or Progenitor. But now, whatever Hypothesis they are minded to take ; whether they suppose a Beginning, or no Beginning of human Generation ; whether they suppose Men to have sprung out of the *Sea*, or out of the *Land* ; to have been produc'd from *Eggs* cast into the *Matrix* of the Earth, or out of certain little *Pustule*, or Fungosities on its *Surface* ; to have been begotten by the *Anima Mundi* in the Sun, or by an *Anima Terræ*, pervading the Body of this terraqueous Globe ; to have been sent forth into the World silently, and without Noise, or to have open-

ed the Womb of their *common Mother* with loud Claps of Thunder : Take they which of these *Hypotheses* they will, I say, and, when they once come to reason upon it, they will soon find themselves hamper'd and entangled with Absurdities, and Impossibilities almost innumerable.

ALL Nations, to whom the Philosophers, in search after Knowledge, resorted, had Memorials, we find, left among them, of the first Origin of Things ; but the universal *Tradition* of the first Ages was far better preserv'd among the *Eastern*, than *Western* Nations, and these Memorials kept with greater Care by the *Phœnicians* and *Egyptians*, than by the *Greeks* and *Romans*. (*b*) Among the *Greeks* however, when they first undertook to philosophize, the Beginning of the World, with the gradual Progression of its Inhabitants, was no Matter of Dispute ; but, that being taken for granted, the Enquiry was, *out of what Material Principles the Cosmical System was formed* ; and *Aristotle*, arrogating to himself the Opinion of the World's Eternity as a *Nostrum*, declar'd, that all Mankind, before him, asserted the World's Creation.

FROM this wild Notion of *Aristotle*, in Opposition to an universal Tradition, and the Consent of all Ages, the *Poets* took Occasion to turn the Histories of the oldest Times into *Fables* ; and the Historians, in Requital and Courtesy to them, converted the Fables, which the Poets had invented, into *Histories*, or rather popular Narratives ; and most of the famous Nations of the Earth, that they might not be thought more *modern*, than any of their Neighbours, took Occasion too of forging certain *Antiquities*, foolish Genealogies, extravagant Calculations, and the fabulous *Actions* and Exploits of *Gods* and *Heroes*, that they might thus add to their Nobility, by an imaginary *Anticipation* of Time, beyond the possible Limits, that cou'd be made known by any Pretence of Certainty.

U n n

T H E

From Gen. x. to the End ; and from Ch. xi. 10, to the End.

(*f*) Biblioth. Bib. in the Introduction, p. 77. Biblica, Vol. I. Occas. Annot. c. 17.

(*g*) M. de Loubere's Hist. of Siam.

(*b*) Bibliotheca



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THE wiser Sort of Men however saw into this ; and, from the ordinary Increase and Propagation of Mankind, the Invention and Growth of Arts and Sciences, and the Advancements carry'd on in civil Discipline and Government, cou'd discern the Folly and Superstition of all such Romantick Pretensions : But then, having lost the true ancient *Tradition*, they were drove to the Necessity of a perpetual Vicissitude, either of *general* or *particular* Deluges ; by which, when Things were come to their *Crisis* and Perfection, they were made to begin again, and all preceding Memoirs were supposed to be lost in these Inundations. But this is all a groundless Conjecture, a mere begging of the Question, and a Kind of *prophesying backwards* of such Alterations and *Revolutions*, as it is morally impossible for them to know any Thing of.

SINCE therefore an *eternal Succession* of Generations is loaded with a Multitude of insuperable Difficulties, and no valid Arguments are to be found, for making the World older, than our *sacred Books* do make it ; since the presum'd Grandeur of the *Affyrian*, and other Monarchies, too soon after the Flood to be peopled by *Noah's* Children, is a gross Mistake, and the Computations of the *Chaldeans*, and other Nations, from their Observations of the *celestial* Bodies, groundless and extravagant ; since all the Pretensions of the several *Aborigines* are found to be ridiculous, and the more plausible Inventions of successive *Revolutions* entirely imaginary ; since neither the *Self-originists*, nor the *Revolutionists*, even upon their own Principles, can account for what is most easily accounted for by the Writings of *Moses* ; and (what is a farther Consideration) since † there are many Customs and Usages, both *civil* and *religious*, which have pre-

vail'd in all Parts of the World, and can owe their Original to nothing else, but a general Institution ; which Institution cou'd never have been, had not all Mankind been of the same Blood originally, and instructed in the same common Notices, before they were divided in the Earth : Since the Matter stands thus, I say, we have all the Reason in the World to believe, that this whole Narration of *Moses*, concerning the Origination of Mankind, their Destruction by the Flood, their Renovation by the Sons of *Noah*, their speedy Multiplication to a great Number, their Dispersion upon the Confusion of Languages, and their settling themselves in different Parts of the World, according to their Allotments, is true in Fact ; because it is rational, and consistent with every Event ; consonant to the Notions, we have of God's Attributes ; and not repugnant to any System of either *antient* or *modern Geography*, that we know of.

TIME indeed, and the *uncertain State* of Languages ; the *different Pronunciation* of the same Word, according to the Dialect of different Nations ; the *Alterations* of Names in several Places, and *Substitution* of others of the like Importance in the *vernacular Tongue* ; the *disguising* of antient Stories in Fables, and frequently *mistaking* the Idiom of *oriental* Languages ; the *Inundation* of *Barbarism* in many Countries, and the *Conquests* and *Revolutions*, generally introductive of new Names, which have happen'd *almost in all* ; these, and several other Causes, create some Perplexity in determining the Places recorded by *Moses*, and ascertaining the Founder of each particular Nation : But still, notwithstanding these Disadvantages, we may, in some Measure, trace the Foot-steps of the Sons of *Noah*, issuing out from *Babel* into the different Quarters of the World, and,

From Gen. x. to the End ; and from Ch. xi. 10, to the End.

And that we have certain Knowledge how some particular Nations were peopled.

† Such are, 1. The Numbering by *Decads*. 2. The Computing Time by a Cycle of *seven Days*. 3. The Sacredness of the *seventh* Number, and Observation of a *seventh* Day as holy. 4. The Use of *Sacrifices*, *propitiatory*, and *eucharistical*. 5. The Consecration of *Temples* and *Altars*. 6. The Institution of *Sanctuaries*, and their Privileges. 7. Separation of *Tenths*, and *First Fruits* to the Service of the Altar. 8. The Custom of Worshipping the Deity *disincarnated*, or *bare footed*. 9. Abstinence of *Husbands* from their Wives before Sacrifice. 10. The Order of *Priesthood*, and the Maintenance of it. 11. Most of the *Expiations*, and *Pollutions*, mentioned by *Moses*, in Use among all famous Nations. 12. An universal Tradition of two *Protoplasts*, *Deluges*, and *renewing* Mankind afterwards. Biblioth. Bibl. Vol. I. p. 296.



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and, in ſeveral Countries, perceive the original Names of their *Founders* preſerved in that of their own.

FOR tho' the *Analogy* of Names be not, at all Times, a certain Way of coming to the Knowledge of Things ; yet, in this Caſe, I thing it can hardly be deny'd, but that the *Aſſyrians* deſcended from *Aſſur* ; the *Canaanites*, from *Canaan* ; the *Sidonians*, from *Sidon* ; the *Lydians*, from *Lud* ; the *Medes*, from *Madai* ; the *Thracians*, from *Tiras* ; the *Elamites*, from *Elam* ; the *Ionians*, from *Javan* ; with ſeveral others produced by (k) *Grotius*, (l) *Montanus*, (m) *Junius*, (n) *Pererius*, and, more eſpecially, (o) by *Bockart*, that moſt ſplendid Star of France (as (p) one calls him upon this Occaſion) who, with wonderful Learning and Induſtry, has clear'd all this Part of ſacred Hiſtory, and given a full and ſatisfactory Account of the ſeveral Places, where the Poſterity of *Noah* ſeated themſelves after the Deluge.

By what Ways and what Nations, America might be peopled.

How the large Continent of *America* came to be peopled (ſince no Mention is made of it in the Writings of *Moſes*, and ſo vaſt a Sea ſeparates it from any other Part of the known World) is a Queſtion, that has exerciſed the Wit of every Age, ſince its firſt Diſcovery. It is worthy our Obſervation however, that, tho' all the great *Quarters* of the World are, for the moſt Part, ſeparated from each other, by ſome vaſt extenſive *Ocean* ; (q) yet there is always ſome Place or other, where ſome *Iſthmus*, or ſmall Neck of Land, is found to conjoin them, or ſome narrow Sea is made to diſtinguiſh and divide them. *Asia* and *Africa*, for Inſtance, are joined together by an *Iſthmus*, which lies between the *Mediterranean-Sea*, and the *Arabian-Gulf*. Upon the Coaſts of *Spain* and *Mauritania*, *Europe* and *Africa* are divided by no larger a Sea than the *Fretum Herculis*, or *Straits of Gibraltar* ; and above the *Palus Mæotis*, *Europe* has nothing to part it from *Asia*, but the ſmall River *Tanais*. *America*, as it is divided into *North* and

*South*, is join'd together by a Neck of Land, which, from Sea to Sea, is not above 18 Leagues over : What ſeparates the *North-America* from the *Northern* Parts of *Asia*, is only the *Straits of Ani-en* ; or *South-America* from the moſt *Southern* Parts of *Asia*, is only the *Straits of Magellan*. And therefore, ſince Providence, in the Formation of the Earth, has ſo ordered the Matter, that the principal *Continents* are, at ſome Places or other, always join'd together by ſome little *Iſthmus*, and generally ſeparated by ſome narrow Sea ; and (what is further to be obſerv'd) ſince moſt of the capital *Islands* in our Part of the *Hemisphere*, ſuch as *Sumatra* in *Asia*, *Madagascar* in *Africa*, and *England* in *Europe*, are generally at no great Diſtance from the Continent ; we have ſome Reaſon to preſume, that there may poſſibly be a certain Neck of Land (tho' not as yet diſcovered) which may join ſome Part of *Asia*, or perhaps ſome Part of *Europe*, to the main Continent of *America*. Or, if we may not be allowed that Suppoſition, yet (r) why might there not formerly have been ſuch a Bridge (as we may call it) between the *South-Eaſt* Part of *China*, and the moſt *Southern* Continent of this new World, tho' now broken off (as (s) ſome ſuppoſe *England* to have been from France) by the violent Concuffions of the Sea ; as indeed the vaſt Number of *Islands*, which lie between the Continent of *China* and *Nova Guinea* (which are the moſt contiguous to each other) would induce one to think, that once they were all one continued Tract of Land, tho', by the Irruption of the Sea, they are now crumbled into ſo many little *Islands* ?

From Gen. x. to the End ; and from Ch. xi. 10, to the End.

THE Difference however between the Inhabitants of *South* and *North-America*, is ſo remarkably great, that there is Reaſon to imagine, they receiv'd Colonies at firſt from different Countries ; and therefore ſome are of Opinion, that, as the Children of *Shem*, being now well verſ'd in Navigation, might, from the Coaſts of *China*,

(k) Vid. Annot. l. 1. de Verit. (l) Phaleg. (m) In Gen. x. (n) Ibid. (o) Phaleg. (p) Heidegger. (q) Heidegger's Hiſt. Patriarcharum, Vol. 1. Exer. 22. (r) Patrick's Commentary. (s) Vid. the new general Atlas.



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China, take Possession of the Southern Parts; so might the Children of Japhet, either from Tartary, pass over the Straits of Anien, or out of Europe, first pass into Norway, thence into Island, thence into Groenland, and so into the Northern Parts of America: And this they think the more probable, because of the great Variety of Languages, which are observed among the Natives of this great Continent; a good Indication, as one wou'd imagine, of their coming thither at different Times, and from different Places.

The Isles of the  
Gentiles.

WE indeed, according to the common Forms of Speech, call those Places *Islands*, which are, on every Side, surrounded by the Sea; but the *Hebrews* were wont to give that Name to all *Maritime* Countries, such, as either had several Islands belonging to them, or such, as had no Islands at all, provided they were divided from *Palestine* or from *Egypt* by the Sea, and could not conveniently be gone to any other Way. (t) Such are the Countries of the *Lesser Asia*, and the Countries of *Europe*, where the Descendants of Japhet were seated; and that by these are denoted the *Isles of the Gentiles*, \* might be evinc'd from several parallel Passages in Scripture. At present we need only take Notice, that, as the *Lesser Asia* was, from *Babel*, the nearest Place of Japhet's Allotment, 'tis very probable, that he and his Sons continu'd there for some Time, till the Increase of their Progeny made them send out Colonies, which not only peopled the *Isles* of the *Mediterranean* and *Egean* Seas, but,

passing into *Europe*, spread themselves farther and farther, till at length they came to take Possession of the very *Island*, wherein we now live.

To this Purpose, the Writers on this Subject have made it appear, that, from their original Country, which was *Asia Minor*, they sent a Colony to the *Mæotic Lake*, on the North of the *Euxine Sea*; and, as they were called *Cimmerii* in *Asia*, so they gave the Name of *Bosphorus Cimmerius* to the Straits, we there meet with; that, after this, spreading farther, they fell down the *Danube*, and settled in a Country, which † from them was called *Germany*; that, from *Germany*, they advanced still farther, till they came into *France*, for the Inhabitants of *France*, (as (u) *Josephus* tells us) were antiently called *Gomorites*; and that from *France*, they came into the South Part of *Britain*, and therefore we find that the *Welsh*, (the antient Inhabitants of this Isle) call themselves *Kumero*, or *Cymro*, call a Woman, *Kumeraes*, and the Language they speak, *Kumeraeg*, which several Words carry in them such plain Marks of the original Name, from whence they are derived, that, if any Regard is to be had to *Etymologies* in Cases of this Nature, we cannot forbear concluding that the true old Britons, or *Welsh*, are the genuine Descendants of *Gomer*. And, since it is observ'd, that the *Germans* were likewise the Descendants of *Gomer*, particularly the *Cymbri*, to whom the *Saxons*, and especially the *Angles*, were near Neighbours, it

From Gen. x.  
to the End.  
and from Ch.  
xi. 10, to the  
End.

And that of  
England.

(t) *Well's Geography of the Old Testament*, Vol. I.

\* Thus the Prophet *Isaiah* [Ch. xi. 10, 11.] speaking of the Calling of the *Gentiles*, and of the Restoration of the *Jews*, has these Words: *The Lord shall recover the Remnant of his People from Assyria, Egypt, Pathros, Cush, Elam, Shinar, Hamah, and from the Isles of the Sea*: Where, by the *Isles of the Sea* (which is the same with the *Isles of the Gentiles*) we must necessarily understand such Countries, as are distinct from the Countries, which are here expressly nam'd, viz. *Assyria, Egypt, &c.* and therefore most likely the Countries of *Lesser Asia*, and *Europe*. The same Prophet, in order to shew God's Omnipotency, speaks in this Manner: *Behold the Nations are as a Drop of the Bucket, and are counted as the small Dust of the Balance; behold he takes up the Isles as a very little Thing*. Ch. xl. 15. Where, if by *Isles* we mean those, which we call strictly so, the Comparison of the Disparity is lost, because those, which we call *Isles*, are indeed very little Things; and therefore the proper Signification of the Word, in this Place, must be, those large Countries, which were beyond the Sea, in regard to *Egypt* whence *Moses* came, or *Palestine*, whither he was now going. *Well's Geography*, Vol. I. p. 113.

† The People of this Country are called *Germani*, and they call themselves *Germen*, which is but a small Variation, and easy Contraction for *Gomeri*, i. e. *Gomerians*: For the Termination *en* is a Plural Termination in the *German* Language; and from the single Number *Gomer*, is formed *Germen*, by the same Analogy, that from Brother we form Brethren. *Well's Geography*, Vol. I. p. 127, and *Bedford's Scripture Chronology*, l. 2. c. 4.

(u) *Antiq. l. 1.*



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it will hence likewise follow, that our Ancestors, who succeeded the old Britons \* in the *Eastern* Part of this Isle, were in a Manner, descended from Gomer, the first Son of Japhet.

THUS we see, (x) that the Plantations of the World, by the Sons of Noah and their Offspring, recorded by Moses in this tenth Chapter of *Genesis*, and by the inspir'd Author of the first Book of *Chronicles*, are not *unprofitable Fables*, or *endless Genealogies*, but a most valuable Piece of History, which distinguishes, from all

other People, that particular Nation, of which Christ was to come; gives Light to several Predictions, and other Passages in the Prophets; shews us the first Rise and Origin of all Nations, their gradual Increase, and successive Migrations, Cities building, Lands cultivating, Kingdoms rising, Governments settling, and all to the Accomplishment of the divine Benediction: (y) *Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the Earth; and the Fear of you, and the Dread of you shall be upon every other Creature.*

From Gen. x. to the End; and from Ch. xi. 10, to the End.

## DISSERTATION III.

*Of the sacred Chronology, and profane History, Letters, Learning, Religion, and Idolatry, &c. during this Period.*

The Difference that is found in the sacred Chronology.

BEFORE we enter upon the History of the World, (as it is deliver'd in some *Heathen* Authors) from the Time of the Flood, to the Calling of *Abraham*, it may not be improper to settle the *sacred Chronology*; and that the rather, because the Difference is very considerable, (as appears by the subsequent Table) according as we follow the Computation of the *Hebrew Text*, of the *Samari-*

*tan Copies*, or of the *Greek Interpreters*. But, before we come to this, we must observe, that, in the Catalogue, which we refer to, *Moses* takes Notice of no other Branch of *Noah's* Family, but only that of *Shem*, and his Descendants in a direct Line to *Abraham*, and the different Computations (z), relating to them, may be best perceiv'd by the following Table.

\* To shew how the *Western* Part of our *Island* came likewise to be peopled, the above-cited Author of *Scripture Chronology* supposes, that when *Joshua* made his Conquests in the Land of *Canaan*, several of the Inhabitants of *Tyre*, being struck with the Terror of his Arms, left their Country, and being skill'd in the Art of Navigation, sail'd into *Africa*, and there built a City, call'd *Carthage*, or the *City of the Wanderers*, as he interprets the Word; that the *Syrians* and *Phœnicians* being always considerable Merchants, and now settling in a Place convenient for their Purpose, began to enlarge their Trade, and coasting the Sea-Shore of *Spain*, *Portugal*, and *France*, happen'd, at length, to chop upon the Islands, call'd *Cassiterides*, now the *Islands of Scilly*, whereof he gives us a Description from *Strabo*; that, having here fallen into a Trade for Tin and Lead, it was not long before they discover'd the *Land's-End*, on the West-Side of *Cornwall*, and finding the Country much more commodious than *Scilly*, remov'd from thence, and here made their Settlement. And this Conjecture he accounts more sensible, by Reason of the great Affinity between the *Cornish* Language, and the ancient *Hebrew* or *Phœnician*, l. 2. c. 4. p. 195.

(x) *Millar's Church History*, Ch. 1. Per. 2.

(y) *Gen. ix. 1, 2.*

(z) *Usher's Chron. Sac. Cap. 2.*



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Gen. Ch. x.  
to the End;  
and from Ch.  
xi. 10, to the  
End.

	After the Flood	Heb.	Sam.	Sep.	Heb.	Sam.	Sep.	Heb.	Sam.	Sep.
1	Shem was	2	2	2	500	500	500		600	
2	Arphaxad —	35	135	135	403	300	330		438	
3	Cainan —	0	0	130	0	0	330		0	
4	Salah —	30	130	130	403	303	330		433	
5	Eber —	34	134	134	430	270	270		404	
6	Peleg —	30	130	130	209	109	209		239	
7	Reu —	32	132	132	207	107	207		239	
8	Serug —	30	130	130	200	100	200		230	
9	Nabor —	29	79	79	119	69	125		148	
10	Terah the Father of Abram.	70	70	70				205	145	205
	In all	292	942	1072						
		Before they had Children.			After they had Children.			Before they died.		

Now, whoever casts his Eye into this Table, may easily perceive, that, except the *Variations*, which may possibly have been occasion'd by the Negligence of *Transcribers*, (a) the Difference, between the *Samaritan* and *Septuagint* Chronology, is so very small, that one may justly suspect, that the former has been transcrib'd from the latter, on purpose to supply some Defect in its Copy; but that the Difference, between the *Greek* and *Hebrew* Chronology, is so very great, that the one or other of them must be egregiously wrong; because the *Septuagint* do not only add a Patriarch, nam'd *Cainan*, never mention'd in the *Hebrew*, and so make *eleven* Generations, from *Shem* to *Abraham*, instead of *ten*; but, in the Lives of most of these Patriarchs, they insert 100 Years, before they came to have Children, *i. e.* they make them Fathers 100 Years later than the *Hebrew* Text does, tho' (to bring the Matter to a Compromise) they generally deduct them again in the Course of their Lives.

ON both Sides have appear'd Men of great Learning; but they, who assert the Cause of the *Septuagint*, are not unmindful to urge the Testimony of *St Luke*, who, (b) between *Arphaxad* and *Salah*, has insert'd the Name of *Cainan*, which (as he was an inspir'd Writer) he could never have done, had not the *Septuagint* been right, in correcting the *Hebrew* Scriptures: Besides that, the Numbers in the *Septuagint* give Time for the Propagation of Mankind, and seem to agree better with the History of the first Kingdoms of the World.

ON the other Hand, they, who abide by the *Hebrew* Text, cannot think, that the Authority of the *Septuagint* is not so sacred, as their Adversaries imagine. Upon Examination, they find many Things added, many Things omitted, and, through the Whole, so many Faults almost every where occurring, that, were a Man to recount them all, (c) *St Jerom* expresses it) he would be oblig'd not only to write one, but many Books; “nor need we  
“feck

The Arguments  
for and against  
the LXX Com-  
putation.

(a) *Shuckford's Connection*, Vol. I. l. 3.

(b) Chap. iii. 36.

(c) On *Jeremiah*, xvii.



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“ seek for distant Examples of this Kind,  
“ (d) says *Bochart*, since this very Ge-  
“ nealogy is all full of *Anacronisms*, vastly  
“ different, both from the *Hebrew* and  
“ the *Vulgar Version*.”

EDITIONS moreover there were of an antient Date, which, in Imitation of the *Alexandrian Manuscript*, preserv'd by *Origen* in his *Hexapla*, had none of this Insertion. Both *Philo* and *Josephus*, tho' they make use of the *Septuagint Version*, know nothing of *Cainan*; and *Eusebius* and *Africanus*, tho' they took their Accounts of these Times from it, have no such Person among their *Postdiluvians*; and therefore (e) it is highly reasonable to believe, that this Name crept into the *Septuagint* thro' the Carelessness of some Transcriber, who, inattentive to what he was about, inserted an *Antediluvian* Name (for such a Person there was before the Flood) among the *Postdiluvians*, and having no *Numbers* for his Name, wrote the *Numbers* belonging to *Salab* twice over.

SINCE therefore the *Hebrew* Text, in all Places, where we find *Noah's* Posterity enumerated, takes not the least Notice of *Cainan*, but always declares *Salab* to be the immediate Son and Successor of *Arphaxad*; (f) we must either say, that *Moses* did, or that he did not know of the Birth of this pretended *Patriarch*; If he *did not*, how came the *LXX* Interpreters by the Knowledge of what *Moses*, who liv'd much nearer the Time, was a diligent Searcher into Antiquity, and had the Assistance of a divine Spirit in every Thing he wrote, was confessedly ignorant of? If he *did* know it, what possible Reason can be assign'd for his concealing it, especially when his Insertion or Omission of it makes such a remarkable Variation in the Account of Time, from the Flood, to the Call of *Abraham*; unless he was minded to impose upon us by a false or confus'd *Chronology*, which

his distinct Observation of the Series of the other Generations, and his just Assignment of the Time, which belong'd to each, will not suffer us to think.

From Gen. x. to the End; and from Ch. xi. 10, to the End.

RATHER therefore than impeach this *Servant* of God (who has this Testimony upon Record, that (g) *he was faithful in all his House*) either of Ignorance, or Ill-intent, we may affirm (with *Bochart*, and his Followers) that *St Luke* never put *Cainan* into his Genealogy, (for as much as † it is not to be found in some of the best *Manuscripts* of the *New Testament*) but that some Transcribers, finding it in the *Septuagint*, and not in *St Luke*, mark'd it down in the *Margin* of their Copies, as an Omission in the Copies of *St Luke*, and so later Copiers and Editors, finding it thus in the *Margin*, took it, at last, into the Body of the Text, as thinking, perhaps, that this Augmentation of Years might give a greater Scope to the Rise of Kingdoms, which otherwise might be thought too sudden: whereas (if we will believe a very competent Judge of this Matter) “ (b) those, who contend  
“ for the *Numbers* of the *Septuagint*,  
“ must either reject (as some do) the con-  
“ current Testimony of the *Heathen*  
“ *Greeks*, and the *Christian* Fathers, con-  
“ cerning the antient Kingdoms of *Assy-*  
“ *ria* and *Egypt*, or must remove all  
“ those Monarchies farther from the Flood.  
“ Nor must the Testimony of *Varro* be  
“ overlook'd, which tells us, that there  
“ were but 1600 Years between the first  
“ Flood and the *Olympiads*; whereas this  
“ Number is exceeded seven or eight hun-  
“ dred Years by the *Septuagint's* Ac-  
“ count. These, and several other Con-  
“ siderations, says he, incline me to the  
“ *Hebrew* Numbers of the *Patriarchs*  
“ generating, rather than to the *Seventy's*;  
“ because, by the Numbers of the *Seven-*  
“ *ty*, there must be about 900 Years be-  
“ tween the Flood and the first Year of  
“ *Ninus*,

(d) Phaleg. l. 2. c. 2.  
tion, Vol. I. l. 2.

(e) *Heidegger's* Hist. Patriar. Vol. II. Exer. 1.

(f) *Shuckford's* Connec-

(g) Heb. iii. 2.

† The antient Manuscript of the *Gospels* and *Acts*, both in *Greek* and *Latin*, which *Besa* presented to the University of *Cambridge*, wants it; nor is it to be found in some Manuscripts, which Archbishop *Usher*, in his *Chron. Sacr.* p. 32. makes mention of. *Millar's* History of the Church, Ch. 1. Period 2.

(b) Bishop *Cumberland's* Origin. Antiquif. p. 177, &c.



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"Ninus, which certainly is too much  
"Distance between a Grandfather and a  
"Grandchild's beginning to reign."

THUS it seems reasonable to suppose, that the Interpolation of the Name of *Cainan*, in the LXX's Version, might be the Work of some ignorant and pragmatical Transcriber: And, in like Manner, the *Addition* and *Subtraction* of several hundred Years, in the Lives of the Fathers beforemention'd, might be effected by such another *Instrument*, (*i*) who, thinking perhaps, that the Years of the *Antediluvian* Lives were but *Lunar* ones, and computing, that, at this Rate, the fix Fathers (whose Lives are thus alter'd) must have had their Children at 5, 6, 7, 8 Years old, (which cou'd not but look incredible) might be induc'd to *add* the 100 Years, in order to make them of a more probable Age of Manhood, at the Birth of their respective *Children*. Or, if he thought the Years of their Lives to be *Solar*, yet still he might imagine, that *Infancy* and *Childhood* were proportionably longer in Men, who were to live 7, 8, or 900 Years, than they are in us; and that it was too early in their Lives, for them to be Fathers at 60, 70, or 80 Years of Age; for which Reason he might *add* the 100 Years, to make their Advance to Manhood (which is commonly not till one *fourth* Part of our Days is near over) proportionable to what was to be the ultimate Term of their Lives.

THIS seems to be the only Method of reconciling the Difference between the LXX Version and the *Hebrew* Text, in Point of *Chronology*; and now to proceed to what we find recorded in *profane* History, during this Period.

AFTER the Dispersion of Nations, the only Form of Government, that was in Use for some Time, was *paternal*, when Fathers of Nations were as *Kings*, and the eldest of Families, as *Princes*: But as Mankind increas'd, and their Ambition grew higher, the Dominion, which was founded in

*Nature*, gave Place to that, which was acquir'd, and establish'd by *Power*.

IN early Ages, a Superiority of *Strength* or *Stature* was the most engaging Qualification to raise Men to be Kings and Rulers. The *Ethiopians*, (*k*) as *Aristotle* informs us, made Choice of the tallest Persons to be their Princes; and, tho' *Saul* was made King of *Israel* by the special Appointment of God, yet it appears to have been a Circumstance, not inconsiderable in the Eyes of the People, (*l*) that *he was a choice young Man, and goodly; and that there was not, among the Children of Israel, a goodlier Man than he*. But when Experience came to convince Men, that other Qualifications, besides *Stature* and *Strength*, were necessary for the People's Happiness, they then chose Persons of the greatest Wisdom and Prudence for their Governors. (*m*) Some wise and understanding Man, who knew best how to till and cultivate the Ground, to manage Cattle, to prune and plant Fruit-trees, &c. took into their Families, and promis'd to provide for such, as would become their Servants, and submit to their Directions: And thus, in Continuance of Time, *Heads* of Families became Kings; their *Houses*, together with the near Habitations of their *Domesticks*, became *Cities*, their *Servants*, in their several Occupations and Employments, became wealthy and considerable *Subjects*; and the *Inspectors* and *Overseers* of them, became *Ministers of State*, and Managers of the publick Affairs of the Kingdom.

IN the first Beginning of *political* Societies, almost every Town (as we may suppose) had its own *King*, (*n*) who, more attentive to *preserve* his Dominions, than to *extend* them, restrain'd his Ambition within the Bounds of his native Country; till Disputes with Neighbours, (which were sometimes unavoidable) Jealousy of a more powerful Prince, an enterprizing Genius, or martial Inclination, occasion'd those Wars, which often ended in the absolute Subjection

From Gen. x.  
to the End;  
and from Ch.  
xi. 10, to the  
End.

The Erection  
of Kingdoms.

The profane  
History during  
this Period.

(i) *Shuckford's Connection*, Vol. I. Lib. 5. ex *Lud Capelli*, Chron. Sacra in Apparatu *Walton* ad Bibl. Polyglot.  
(k) De Repub. l. 4. c. 4. (l) 1 Sam. ix. 2. (m) *Shuckford's Connection*, Vol. II. l. 6. (n) *Justin*, l. 1. c. 1.



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Subjection of the *Vanquish'd*, whose Possessions, falling into the Power of the Conqueror, enlarged his Dominions, and both encouraged, and enabled him to push on his Conquests by new Enterprizes.

The Reign of  
Nimrod.

NIMROD was the first Man, we meet with in Scripture, who made Invasions upon the Territories of others: For he dispossest *Asbur*, the Son of *Shem*, who had settled himself in *Shinar*, and oblig'd him to remove into *Assyria*, whilst himself seiz'd on *Babylon*, and having repair'd, and not a little enlarg'd it, made it the Capital of his Kingdom.

A Description  
of Babylon.

(o) THIS City was situate on both Sides of the River *Euphrates*, having Streets running from *North* to *South*, parallel with the River, and others from *East* to *West*. † The Compass of the Wall, which was furrounded with a vast Ditch filled with Water, was 480 Furlongs, *i. e.* about 60 Miles; the Height of it 350 Feet, and the Breadth so vastly great, that Carts and Carriages might meet on the Top of it, and pass one another without Danger. Over the *Euphrates* (which cut the City into two equal Parts, from *North* to *South*) there was a stately Bridge, and at each End of the Bridge, ‡ a magnificent Palace, the one of 4, and the other of 8 Miles Circumference; and belonging to the larger Palace, were those *hanging* Gardens, which had so celebrated a Name among the *Greeks*. They were made in Form of a Square of 400 Foot on every Side, and were carried up aloft into the Air, in the Manner of several large *Terrasses*, one above another, till they came up to

the Height of the Walls of the City. They were sustained by vast *Arches*, built upon Arches, one above another, and strengthen'd by a Wall on every Side, that was 22 Feet thick; and, as they wanted no Plants, or Flowers, fit for a Garden of Pleasure, so there are said to have grown in them Trees, which were no less than eight Cubits thick in the Body, and 50 Feet in Height. But this, among other pompous Things appertaining to this City, was the Work of Ages, subsequent to *Nimrod*, and built by *Nebuchadnezzar*, to gratify his Wife *Amytis*, who, being the Daughter of *Astyages*, King of *Media*, and much pleased with the mountainous and woody Parts of her own Country, was desirous of having something like it in *Babylon*.

FROM the *Assyrians*, this great and noble City came into the Hands of the *Persians*, and from them into the Hands of the *Macedonians*. Here it was, that *Alexander the Great* died: But, not long after his Death, the City began to decline apace, by the building of *Seleucia*, about 40 Miles above it, by *Seleucus Nicanor*, who is said to have erected this new City, in Spleen to the *Babylonians*, and to have drawn out of *Babylon* 500,000 Persons to people it: so that the antient City was, in the Time of *Curtius* the *Historian*, lessened a fourth Part; in the Time of *Pliny*, reduc'd to Desolation; in the Days of *St. Jerom* turn'd into a Park, wherein the Kings of *Persia* did use to hunt; and, according to the Relation \* of some late Travellers, is now reduc'd to one Tower

Y y y

only,

From Gen. x.  
to the End;  
and from Ch.  
xi. 10. to the  
End.

(o) *Prideaux's* Connection.

† It must be observ'd however, that all this Compass of Ground was not really built upon; for the Houses stood at a considerable Distance, with Gardens and Fields interspers'd; so that it was a large City in *Scheme*, rather than in *Reality*. *Prideaux's* Connection, Part I. l. 2.

‡ The old Palace (which was probably built by *Nimrod*) stood on the *East* Side of the River, and the new one (which was built by *Nebuchadnezzar*) exactly over against it, on the *West* Side. *Prideaux*, *ibid*.

\* Mr *Renewolf*, who, in 1574, passed thro' the Place, where this once famous City stood, speaks of the Ruins of it, in the following Manner. "The Village of *Elugo*, says he, is now situate, where heretofore *Babylon* of *Chaldea* stood. The Harbour, where People go ashore, in order to proceed by Land to the City of *Bagdail*, is a Quarter of a League distant from it. The Soil is so dry and barren, that they cannot till it; and so naked, that I could never have believed, that this powerful City, once the most stately and renown'd in all the World, and situated in the fruitful Country of *Shinar*, could have stood there, had I not seen, by the Situation of the Place, by many Antiquities of great Beauty, which are to be seen round about, and, especially, by the old Bridge over the *Euphrates*, whereof some Piles and Arches, of incredible Strength, are still remaining, that it certainly did stand there. — The whole Front of the Village *Elugo* is the Hill, upon which the Castle stood, and the Ruins of its

" Fortifications



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only, call'd the Tower of *Daniel*, from whence may be seen all the Ruins of this once vast and splendid City.

It can hardly be imagined, that the first Kings were able, either to make, or execute Laws, with that Strictness and Rigour, which is necessary in a Body of Men, so large as to afford numerous Offenders: and, for this Reason, it seems to have been a prudent Institution in *Nimrod*, when his City of *Babylon* began to be too populous to be regulated by his Inspection, or govern'd by his Influence, to † lay the Foundations of other Cities; by which Means he disposed of great Numbers of his People, and, putting them under the Direction of such *Deputies* as he might appoint, brought their Minds by Degrees to a Sense of Government, until the beneficial Use of it came to be experienced, and the Force and Power of Laws settled and confirmed. He is supposed to have begun his Reign, A. M. 1757, to have reign'd about 148 Years, and to have died A. M. 1905.

Of *Asshur*.

ABOUT the Beginning of *Nimrod's* Reign, *Asshur*, \* one of the Descendants of *Shem*, being driven from *Babel* (as most suppose) by the Invasion of *Nimrod*, led his Company on the *Tigris*, and, so set-

ting in *Assyria*, laid the first Foundation of *Nineveh*, which, in Process of Time, exceeded even *Babylon* itself in Bigness. For, whereas we observed of *Babylon*, that it was in Circuit 480 Furlongs, (p) the Description, which *Diodorus* gives us of *Nineveh*, is, that it was 150 Furlongs, i. e. near 19 Miles in Length; 90 Furlongs, i. e. somewhat above 11 Miles in Breadth; 480 Furlongs, i. e. just 60 Miles in Circumference; and for this Reason it is (q) called *an exceeding great City, of three Days Journey*, according to the common Estimation of 20 Miles to a Day's Journey. And equal to the *Greatness* was the *Strength* of this City: For its Walls were 100 Feet high, and so very broad, that three Carts might go a-breast on the Top of them; whereon were rais'd 1500 *Turrets*, and each of them 200 Feet high, and so very strong, that the Place was deem'd impregnable, (r) till *Nabopolassar*, King of *Babylon*, having made an Affinity with *Assyages*, King of *Media*, enter'd into a Confederacy with him against the *Assyrians*, and hereupon, joining their Forces together, they besieg'd *Nineveh*, and, after having taken the Place, and slain the King thereof, to gratify the *Medes*, they utterly destroy'd that antient

From Gen. x.  
to the End;  
and from Ch.  
xi. 10. to the  
End.  
A Description  
of *Nineveh*.

"Fortifications are still visible, tho' demolished. Behind, and some little Way beyond, is the Tower of *Babylon*, which is half a League Diameter, but so ruinous, so low, and so full of venomous Creatures, which lodge in the Holes, they make in the Rubbish, that no one durst approach nearer to it, than within half a League, except during two Months in the Winter, when these Animals never stir out of their Holes. *Calmet's* Dictionary."

† The Cities, which he founded, are said to be *Erec*, *Accad*, and *Calne*. *Erec* was the same, that occurs in *Ptolomy*, under the Name of *Arecca*, and which is placed by him at the last, or most Southern Turning of the common Channel of the *Tigris* and *Euphrates*. *Accad* lay Northward of *Erec*, and very probably at the common joining of the *Tigris* and *Euphrates*. And *Calne* (which is said to be the same with *Ctesiphon*) upon the *Tygris*, about 3 Miles distant from *Selencia*, and was for some Time the Capital City of the *Parthians*: For, that it was the same with *Ctesiphon* seems to be confirm'd by the Country, which lies about it, being called *Chalanitis*, which is evidently deriv'd from *Chalne* or *Chalno*, whereby we find it call'd in different Parts of Scripture. *Wells's* Geography, Vol. I. c. 5.

\* Many Authors have imagin'd, that *Nineveh* was not built by *Asshur*, but by *Nimrod* himself, because they think it not likely, that *Moses* should give an Account of the Settlement of one of the Sons of *Shem*, where he is expressly discoursing of *Ham's* Family; and therefore they interpret (as the Marginal Note directs) Gen. x. 11. *Out of that Land went forth Asshur*, he, i. e. *Nimrod*, *went forth into Assyria*, which is the Explanation, that I have, in some Measure, followed: But others imagine, that *Moses* is not so exactly *methodical*, but that, upon mentioning *Nimrod*, and his People, he might hint at a Colony, which departed from under his Government, tho' it happen'd to be led by a Person of another Family; that the Land of *Asshur*, and the Land of *Nimrod* are mention'd as two distinct Countries in *Micah* v. 6. and, that, if *Nimrod* had built *Nineveh*, and planted *Assyria*, *Babylon*, and *Assyria* would have been but one Empire, nor could the one be said to have conquer'd the other with any Propriety: Whereas we are expressly told by *Diodorus*, that the *Assyrians* conquer'd the *Babylonians*; and may thence infer, that, before *Nimrod* united them, *Babylonia* and *Assyria* were two distinct Kingdoms, and not the Plantation of one and the same Founder. *Shuckford's* Connection, Vol. I. l. 4.

(p) *Wells's* Geography.

(q) *Jonah* iii. 3.

(r) *Prideaux's* Connection, Vol. I.



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antient City, and from that Time *Babylon* became the Metropolis of the *Assyrian* Empire.

SUCH was the Rise and Fall of this great City, where *Asbur* govern'd his Subjects much in the same Manner, as *Nimrod* did his in *Babylon*: For, as they increased, he dispers'd them in the Country, and, † having built some other Cities along the *Tigris*, he there settled them under the Government of Deputies, or *Viceroy*s.

Of Menes.

WHILST *Nimrod* and *Asbur* were settling their People in their respective Countries, *Mizraim*, the Second Son of *Ham*, \* and who, by *Heathen* Writers, is constantly called *Menes*, seated himself, at first, near the Entrance of *Egypt*, and there perhaps built the City of *Zoan*, which was antiently the Habitation of the Kings of *Egypt*; but from *Zoan* he removed farther into the Country, and took Possession of those Parts, which were afterwards call'd *Thebais*, where he built the City of *Thebes*, and (as *Herodotus* will have it) the City of *Memphis* likewise. He reign'd 62 Years, and died A. M. 1943.

Of Belus.

*BELUS* succeeded *Nimrod*, and was the second King of *Babylon*; but, whether he was related to his Predecessor or not, is a Thing uncertain. It seems most likely, that, as *Nimrod*, tho' a young Man

in Comparison of many then alive, was advanc'd, for some Merit or other, to the regal Dignity; so, when he died, *Belus* might appear to be the most proper Person; and, for that Reason, was appointed to succeed him: For, he is represented a Prince of Study, the Inventor of the *Chaldean* Astronomy, and one, who spent his Time in cultivating his Country, and improving his People. He reign'd 60 Years, and died A. M. 1969.

*ASHUR*, King of *Nineveh*, dying much about this Time, *Ninus* became the second King of *Assyria*, and proved a Man of an ambitious and enterprising Spirit. *Babylonia* lay too near him, not to become the Object of his Desire; and therefore, making all military Preparations for that Purpose, he invaded it, and, as its Inhabitants had no great Skill in War, soon vanquished them, and laid them under Tribute. His Success in this Attempt made him begin to think of subjecting other Nations: And, as one Conquest paved the Way for another, in a few Years he over-ran many of the *Infant* States of *Asia*, and so, by uniting Kingdom to Kingdom, made a great Accession to the *Assyrian* Empire. His last Attempt was upon *Oxyartes*, or *Zoroastres*, King of *Bactria*, where he met with a brisker Opposition, than he had hitherto

From Gen. x. to the End; and from Ch. xi. 10. to the End.

† The Cities, which *Asbur* is said to have built, were *Reboboth*, *Resen*, and *Calab*. The Word *Reboboth*, in the *Hebrew* Tongue, signifies *Streets*, and the Sacred Historian seems to have added the Word *City*, on Purpose to shew that it was here to be taken as a proper Name. Now, as there are no Footsteps of this Name in these Parts, but a Town there is, by *Ptolemy* call'd *Birtha*, which, in the *Chaldee* Tongue, denotes the same, as does *Reboboth* in the *Hebrew* in an Appellative or common Acceptation; it is hence probably conjectur'd, that *Reboboth* and *Birtha* are only two different Names of one and the same City, which was seated on the *Tigris*, about the Mouth of the River *Lycus*. *Resen* is supposed by most learned Men to be the same City, which *Xenophon* mentions under the Name of *Larissa*, and that, not only because the Situation of this *Larissa* well enough agrees with the Situation of *Resen*, as it is described by *Moses* lying between *Nineveh* and *Calab*; but because *Moses* observes, in the same Text, that *Resen* was a great City, in like Manner, as *Xenophon* tells us, that *Larissa*, tho' then ruined, had been a large City, of 8 Miles Circumference, with Walls 100 Foot high, and 25 Foot broad. And, whereas *Larissa* is a Greek Name, and, in the Days of *Xenophon*, there were no Greek Cities in *Assyria*; for this they account, by supposing, that when the Greeks might ask, what City those were the Ruins of? the *Assyrians* might answer *Larsen*, or of *Resen*, which *Xenophon* expressed by *Larissa*, a Name not unlike several Cities in Greece. And lastly, as to *Calab*, or *Calach*, since we find in *Strabo* a Country, about the Head of the River *Lycus*, call'd *Calachene*, 'tis very probable, that the said Country took this Name from *Calach*, which was one of the capital Cities of it. *Ptolemy* makes Mention likewise of a Country call'd *Calacine* in these Parts: And, whereas *Pliny* mentions a People call'd *Classitæ*, thro' whose Country the *Lycus* runs, there is some Reason to suppose, that *Classitæ* is a Corruption of *Calachitæ*. *Wells's* Geography, Vol. 1.

\* The Person, whom *Moses* calls *Mizraim*, is, by *Diodorus*, and other *Heathen* Writers, commonly call'd *Menes*; by *Syncellus*, *Mesraim*. *Menes* is suppos'd to be the first King of *Egypt* by *Herodotus*, l. 2. by *Diodorus*, l. 1. by *Eratosthenes*, and *Africanus* from *Manetho*; by *Eusebius* and *Syncellus* in *Chro. Euseb.* and the Time of *Menes* coincides very well with those of *Moses's* *Mizraim*, as Sir *John Marsham* [in his *Can. Chron.* p. 2.] has pretty clearly evinced. *Shuckford's* Connection, Vol. 1. l. 4.



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hitherto experienc'd ; but, at length, by the Contrivance and Conduct of *Semiramis*, the Wife of one *Memmon*, a Captain in his Army, he took the *Capital*, and reduc'd the Kingdom : But being hereupon charm'd with the Spirit and Bravery of the Woman, he fell in Love with her, and prevail'd with her Husband, (by giving him his own Daughter, in Lieu of *Semiramis*, in Marriage) to consent to his having her for his Wife. By her he had a Son, nam'd *Nynias* ; and, after a Reign of 52 Years, he died A. M. 2017.

*NINYAS* was but a *Minor* when his Father died ; and therefore his Mother, who, all along, had a great Sway in the Administration of publick Affairs during her Husband's Life-time, continued in the Government, with the † Consent and Approbation of her Subjects. She remov'd her Court from *Nineveh* to *Babylon*, which she encompass'd with the Wall we mentioned before, and adorn'd with many publick and magnificent Buildings ; and, having thus finished the Seat of her Empire, and settled all the neighbouring Kingdoms under her Authority, she rais'd an Army, with an Intent to conquer *India* ; But, after a long and dangerous War, being tired out with Defeats, she was obliged, with the small Remainder of her Forces, to return Home, where, finding herself in Disgrace with her People, she resigned the Crown and Authority to her Son, after she had reign'd 42 Years ; and soon after died, A. M. 2059.

Nynias.

HER Son *Nynias* began his Reign, full of a Sense of the Errors of his Mother's Administration, and engag'd in none of the Wars, and dangerous Expeditions, wherein she had harrafs'd and fatigu'd her People : But, tho' he was not ambitious to enlarge

his Empire, (s) yet he took all due Care to regulate, and settle upon a good Foundation the extensive Dominions, which his Parents had left him. By a wise Contrivance of annual *Deputies* over his Provinces, he prevented many Revolts of distant Countries, which might otherwise have happen'd ; and his taking up that State of being difficult of Access (which was afterwards much improv'd by *Eastern Monarchs*) might perhaps procure him a greater Veneration from his Subjects. However this be, it is certain, that most Authors have represented him as a weak and effeminate Prince, which might naturally arise (without any other Foundation) from his succeeding a Father and Mother, who were rather too active to enlarge their Dominions ; as well as from the Disposition, in most Writers, to think a turbulent and warlike Reign, if victorious, a glorious one, and to overlook an Administration, that is employed in the silent, but more happy Arts of Peace and good Government.

IN *Egypt*, *Mizraim*, after his Death, had three Sons, who became the Kings of the several Parts thereof. *Ananim*, or rather *Anan*, was King of the *Lower Egypt*, or *Delta* ; *Naphtubim*, or *Naph*, of *Middle Egypt*, or the Country about *Memphis* ; and *Pathrusim*, or *Patrus*, of the *Upper-Egypt*, or the Country of *Thebaïs* : and agreeably hereunto, from these three Kings did these several Countries take their antient Denominations. Of the first of these, viz. *Ananim*, we have nothing remaining, but only his Name, and the Time of his Death : For, after he had reigned 63 Years, according to *Syncellus*, he died A. M. 2006.

OF the *Second*, viz. *Naphtubim*, we are told, that he was the Author of the *Architecture*

From Gen. x. to the End ; and from Ch. xi. 10. to the End.

The Kings of Egypt.

† *Justin*, in his History of this Woman, informs us, that, upon the Death of her Husband, she made use of the Stratagem of personating her Son, to obtain the Empire to herself ; but *Diodorus*, with more Probability, ascribes her Advancement to her Conduct, Bravery, and magnanimous Behaviour. When she took upon her to be Queen, the publick Affairs were put in the Hands, to which *Ninus*, when alive, used generally to commit them ; and it is not likely that the People shou'd be uneasy at her governing, who had, for several Years together, by a Series of Actions, gain'd herself a great Credit and Ascendant over them : Especially if we consider, that, when she took up the Sovereignty, she still press'd forward in a Course of Action, which continually exceeded the Expectations of her People, and left no Room for any to be willing to dispute her Authority. *Shuckford's Connection*, Vol. I. l. 4.

(s) *Diodorus Siculus*, l. 2.



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*Architecture* of these Ages ; had some useful Knowledge of *Physick* and *Anatomy* ; and taught his Subjects, (as he learned it from his Brother *Pathrusim*) the Use of Letters : for to this *Pathrusim*, (whom they call *Thyoth*) the *Egyptians* indeed ascribe the Invention of all Arts and Sciences whatever. The *Greeks* call'd him *Hermes*, and *Latins*, *Mercurius* ; and, while his Father *Mizraim* liv'd, he is supposed to have been his Secretary, and greatly assistant to him in all his Undertakings. When his Father died, he instructed his Brothers in all the Knowledge he was Master of ; and, as for his own People, he made wholesome Laws for their Government, settled their Religion and Form of Worship, and enrich'd their Language by the Addition of several Words, to express several Things, which before they had no Names for.

THIS is the best Account that we can give of the *Babylonian* or *Assyrian* Empires, and of the Kings that rul'd *Egypt*, for some Ages next after the Dispersion of Mankind. Other Nations, no doubt, were settled into regular Governments in these Times : *Canaan* was inhabited rather sooner than *Egypt* ; and, (t) according to *Moses*, *Hebron*, in *Canaan*, was built seven Years before *Zoan* in *Egypt* ; but, as none of these Nations made any considerable Figure in the first Ages, their Actions lie in Obscurity, and must be bury'd in Oblivion. The few Men of extraordinary Note, that were then in the World, liv'd in *Egypt*, and *Assyria* ; and for this Reason, we find little or no Mention of any other Countries, until one of these two Nations came to send out Colonies, which, by Degrees, polish'd the People they travelled to, and instructed them in such Arts and Sciences, as made them appear with Credit in their own Age, and (as soon as the Use of Letters was made publick) transmitted their Names with Honour to Posterity.

THE Knowledge of Letters cannot have been of any long Standing among us *Europe-*  
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*peans*, who are settled far from the first Seats of Mankind, and far from the Places, which the Descendants of *Noah* first planted. None of the antient Thracians, (u) says *Ælian*, knew any Thing of Letters ; nay, the Europeans in general, thought it disreputable to learn them, tho' in Asia they were held in greater Request. The *Goths*, according to the express Testimony (x) of *Socrates*, had their Letters and Writings from *Ulphila*, their Bishop, Anno Dom. 370. The *Sclavonians* received theirs from *Methodius*, a Philosopher, about An. Dom. 856. The People of *Dalmatia* had theirs, not till St *Jerom's* ; and those of *Illyria*, not till St *Cyril's* Days.

THE *Latins* (who were more early) receiv'd their Letters (as most Authors agree) from the *Greeks*, and were taught the Use of them, either from some of the Followers of *Pelasgus*, who came into *Italy*, about 150 Years after that *Cadmus* came into *Greece* ; or from the *Arcadians*, whom *Evander* led into those Parts, about 60 Years after *Pelasgus*.

AMONG the *Greeks*, the *Ionians* were the first, who had any Knowledge of Letters ; and they, in all Probability, had them from the *Phœnicians*, who were the Followers of *Cadmus*, when he came into *Greece*, but from whom the *Phœnicians* had them, has been Matter of some Dispute. Many considerable Writers have derived them directly from *Egypt*, and are generally agreed, that *Thyoth*, or *Mercury*, was the Inventor of them. In the early Ages, when Mankind were but few, and these few employ'd in the several Contrivances for Life, it could be but here and there one, that had Leisure, or perhaps Inclination, to study Letters. The Companies, that remov'd from *Babel*, were most of them rude and uncultivated People : They follow'd some Persons of Figure and Eminence, who had gain'd an Ascendant over them ; and these Persons, when they had settled them in distant Places, and came to teach them such Arts as they were Masters of, had every Thing they taught

From Gen. x.  
to the End ;  
and from Ch.  
xi. 10. to the  
End.

The Use and  
Invention of  
Letters.

(t) Numb. xiii. 22.

(u) Universal History, I. 8. c. 6.

(x) Hist. Eccles. I. 4. c. 33.



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taught them, imputed to their own Invention, because the poor ignorant People knew no other Person, that was vers'd and skill'd in them.

THO' therefore the *Egyptians* had, confessedly, the Use of Letters very early among them; and tho' their *Thyoth*, or *Mercury*, might be the first, who taught others their Use, and for that Reason be reputed the Inventor of them; yet, I cannot but think, that *Noah* and his Sons, who had learn'd them in the *old* World, taught them to their Posterity in the *new*. For, since Mankind subsisted 1600 Years before the Flood, 'tis not very probable, that they liv'd all this while without the Use of Letters. If they *did*, how came we by the short Annals, which we have of the *Antediluvian* Ages? But if they *did not*, 'tis not unlikely, that *Noah*, being well skill'd in the Knowledge and Use of them, might teach them to his Children: And, if we pursue the Enquiry, and ask, from whence *Noah* attained his Knowledge, the most proper Reply will be, that he had it from the Instruction of his Parents, as his Parents might have it, in their several Successions, from *Adam*, and as *Adam* might have it from God.

Which was  
Originally  
from God.

AND indeed, if we consider the Nature of Letters, it cannot but appear something strange, that an Invention so surprising, as that of *Writing* is, should be found out in an Age so near the Beginning of the World. (y) Nature may easily be supposed to have prompted Men to speak, to try to express their Minds to one another by Sounds and Noises; but that the Wit of Man shou'd, among its first Attempts, find out a Way to express Words in Figures or Letters, and to form a Method, by which they might expose to View all that can be said or thought, and that within the Compass of 16, 20, or 24 Characters, variously plac'd, so as to form Syllables and Words; that the Wit of Man, I say, could immedi-

ately, and directly fall upon a Project of this Nature, is what exceeds the most exalted Notions, we can possibly form of his Capacity, and must therefore remit us to God (in whom *are hid* all the *Treasures* of infinite *Wisdom*) for the first Invention and Contrivance of it.

From Gen. x.  
to the End;  
and from Ch.  
xi. 10. to the  
End.

As soon as the Use of Letters, whether of *divine* or *human* Invention, came generally to be known, 'tis reasonable to think, that all Arts and Sciences would from thence receive a powerful Assistance, and, in Process of Time, begin to take Root, and flourish; but this was a Period a little too early to bring them to any great Perfection. (z) For, tho' *Noah* and his Sons had doubtless some Knowledge of the Inventions of the *Antediluvians*, and probably acquainted their Descendants with such of them, as were most obvious and useful in common Life; yet it cannot be imagin'd, that any of the more *curious* Arts, or *speculative* Sciences were improved to any Degree (supposing them to be known, and invented) till some considerable Time after the Dispersion. On the contrary, one Consequence of that *Event* seems to have been this — that several Inventions, known to their Ancestors, were lost, and Mankind gradually degenerated into *Ignorance* and *Barbarity*, 'till *Ease* and *Plenty* had given them Leisure to polish their Manners, and to apply themselves to such Parts of Knowledge, as are seldom brought to Perfection under other Circumstances.

The Learning  
Arts, and Com-  
merce.

THE Inhabitants of *Babylon* indeed are supposed to have had a great Knowledge in *Astronomical* Matters, much about this Time; (a) for, when *Alexander the Great* took Possession of that City, *Callisthenes*, the Philosopher, who accompany'd him, upon searching into the Treasures of the *Babylonian* Learning, found, that the *Chaldeans* had a Series of Observations for 1903 Years backwards from that Time; *i. e.* from the 1771<sup>st</sup> Year of the World's Creation forwards. But this is a Notion, that

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(y) *Shuckford's* Connection, Vol. I. l. 4.  
Carlo, l. 2. com. 46.

(z) *Universal History*, l. 1. c. 2.

(a) *Simplicius de*



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we have already confuted; as indeed the Nature of the Thing will teach us, that, upon the first Settlement in any Country, a Nation could not but find Employment enough (at least for some Ages) in cultivating their Lands, and providing themselves Houses, and other Necessaries, for their mutual Comfort and Subsistence.

NINUS and Semiramis are supposed to have improv'd vastly the Arts of War and Navigation about this Period: For, \* we read of Armies, consisting of some Millions of Horse and Foot; and of Fleets, and Gallies, with brazen Beaks, to transport the Forces over a River only, to the Number of two Thousand: But all that Narra-

tion of Diodorus and Justin, as it is acknowledged to be taken from Ctesias (whom † all the best Criticks of Antiquity look upon as an Author deserving no Credit) may very justly be accounted false and fabulous. And tho' it cannot be deny'd, that the Invention of Shipping, which was not before the Flood (for had it been before, more than Noah, and his Family, might have sav'd themselves from the Waters) is a great Step towards the Improvement of Commerce; yet, as the Dispersion of Mankind made it more difficult to trade with Nations, who spake a different Language; so the Method, whereinto, we may suppose, they enter'd at first, extended

From Gen. x. to the End; and from Ch. xi. 10, to the End.

\* The History of the Assyrian Empire, as we have it in Diodorus Siculus, l. 2. c. 1,—22. and in Justin, l. 1. c. 1, 2, is, in the Substance of it, to this Effect.—The first, who extended this Empire, was Ninus, who being a warlike Prince, and desiring to do great Things, gather'd together the stoutest Men in the Country, and, having train'd them up to the Use of Arms, enter'd into an Alliance with Arizæus, King of Arabia, by whose Assistance he subdu'd the Babylonians, and impos'd a Tribute on them, after he had taken their King Captive, and kill'd him, with his Children. Then, having enter'd Armenia with a great Army, and destroy'd several Cities, he so terrify'd the rest, that King Barzanes submitted to him. After this, he vanquish'd Pharnus, King of Media, in Battle; crucify'd him and his Wife, and seven Children; and, in the Space of seventeen Years, overcame all Asia, except India and Bactria; but no Author declares the Particulars of his Victories. Of the maritime Provinces, he subdu'd, according to Ctesias, whom we follow, (says Diodorus) Egypt, Phœnicia, the Lower Syria, Cilicia, Pamphilia, Lycia; and, besides these, Caria, the Phrygias, Lydia, Mysia, Troas, together with the Propontis, Bithnia, Cappadocia, and all the barbarous Nations, as far as the Tanais; with Persia, Sufiana, Caspiana, and many other Nations, that we need not here enumerate. From this last Expedition as soon as he returned, he built a City, which he call'd by his own Name, Ninus, not far from the River Euphrates; and, being afterwards enamour'd with the Beauty and Valour of a Woman of uncertain Birth, nam'd Semiramis, he took her to Wife, and, by her Advice and Direction, govern'd all Things with Success. For, having gather'd together an Army of seventeen hundred thousand Foot, and two hundred and ten thousand Horse, and six hundred thousand armed Chariots, (Numbers incredible in those Days!) with these he advanc'd against Oxyartes, King of Bactria, who met him with an Army of four hundred thousand Men: But the Bactrians being defeated, and their Capital, by the Valour and Direction of Semiramis, taken, she was thereupon advanc'd to the Honour of being made Queen, which occasion'd her Husband to hang himself. After Ninus had thus settled his Affairs in Bactria, his Wife Semiramis had a Son (whom he nam'd Ninys) and not long after died, leaving the Administration of the Kingdom in his Wife's Hands; who, to raise her own Glory, built a stately Monument for her deceas'd Husband; built the City of Babylon, and other remarkable Places; and then, having brought Egypt, Ethiopia, and Lybia, all the Way to the Temple of Jupiter Hammon, under her Jurisdiction, return'd into Asia; where she had not been long, before, hearing that Stabrobates or Staurobates, King of India, govern'd a rich Country, she resolv'd to take it from him. To this Purpose, she prepar'd a great Army, and Fleet: But being told what mighty Elephants there were in India, in order to have something like them, she caus'd three hundred thousand Hides of Oxen to be dress'd, and stuffed with Straw, under which there was a Camel to bear the Machine, and a Man to guide it, which at a Distance, made a Kind of Resemblance of these vast Creatures. Her Army consisted of three Millions of Foot, one Million of Horse, and an hundred thousand Chariots; of an hundred thousand of those that fought on Camels; of two hundred thousand Camels for the Baggage; and two thousand Gallies, with brazen Heads, to transport her Army over the River Indus. But all this must be false and fabulous; because it is incredible to think, either that her own Country should supply, or that the Country, whereinto she was marching, should be able to sustain such an immense Number of Men, and other Creatures, as are here related: Besides that, it is false in Fact, that the Kings of Assyria ever govern'd all Asia, or stretch'd their Conquests over Egypt and Libya. Millar's History of the Church, Ch. 1. Part 3.

† This Ctesias was a Native of Cnidus, and Physician to Artaxerxes Mnemon. He wrote a Persian History in three and twenty Books, of which there remain only a few Fragments, preserv'd by Photius; but very valuable Authors, who have seen Ctesias, when perfect, give him no commendable Character. Plutarch [in Artaxerxes] calls him a fabulous, vain Man, and a great Liar. A. Gellius [Noctes Atticæ l. 9. c. 4.] reckons him among the fabulous Writers; and Aristotle [in his Historia Animalium] says, that he was an Author, who deserves no Credit; as indeed, if we will judge either by the incredible Things in his Story, or by what he says of the Indian and Persian Affairs, in his Fragments that remain, we shall have Reason to conclude, that these great Men have not given him this Character without good Grounds. Millar's History, *ibid.*



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tended no farther than this : — That the Colonies, who planted new Countries, not only perceiving their own Wants, from the Conveniencies they had left behind them, but finding likewise something useful in their Settlements, which were before unknown to them or their Founders, fetched what they wanted from the Parts, where they formerly dwelt, and in Exchange for that, carried, what they had discovered in their new Plantations, thither ; And this seems to have given the first Rise to Traffick and foreign Trade, whose gradual Advances we may have Occasion to take Notice of hereafter. In the mean Time, we shall conclude this *Book*, and this *Chapter* together, with an Account of the *Religion*, which at this Time obtain'd in the most famous Nations of the World ; and observe withal, by what Means it came to degenerate into *Idolatry*, and other wicked, and superstitious *Practices*.

The Religion of  
the Ancients.

Now, besides the common Notion of a God, which Men might either learn from *Tradition*, or collect by their own *Reflection* ; the very History of the *Deluge*, which had not so long ago befallen the World, could not but instruct and confirm the Generations, we are now treating of, in several Articles of their Religion. If they had the Account of this remarkable Judgment transmitted to them in all its Circumstances, they could not but entertain these Conceptions of God : — That he takes Cognizance of the Things, which are done here on Earth ; that he is a Lover of Virtue, and a severe Punisher of Vice ; that he is infinite in Power, by commanding the Winds and Rains, Seas and Elements, to execute his Will ; that he is likewise infinite in Mercy, in forewarning the Wicked of their Ruin (as he did the old World) several Years before its Execution ; and that therefore a Being of such a Nature and Disposition was to be served, and worshipped, and feared, and obeyed. So that the *Sum of Religion*, in the Ages subsequent to

the Flood, even to the Promulgation of the *Law*, must have consisted in the Belief of a God, and his sacred Attributes ; in the devout Worship of him, by the Oblation of Prayers and Praises, and such Sacrifices, as he himself had instituted ; and in the Observance of those eternal Rules of Righteousness, of Justice, and Mercy, of Sobriety, and Temperance, &c. which, if not expressly delivered to the Sons of *Noah*, were nevertheless deducible from the Nature of Things, and the Relations, wherein Mankind stood toward one another.

AND, now, if we look into the principal Nations, which were at this Time existing, we shall find, that (b) the *Persians*, above all other People, were remarkable for having amongst them a true Account of the Creation of the World, and its Destruction by Water ; which they strictly adher'd to, and made the Foundation of their Religion ; nor have we any Reason to think, but that they were, for some Time, very zealous Professors of it, tho', by Degrees, they came to corrupt it, by introducing *Novelties*, and Fancies of their own, into both their *Faith* and *Practice* : We shall find, (c) that many of the antient *Arabians* preserv'd the true Worship of God for several Ages, whereof *Job*, (who perhaps lived in the Days now under Consideration) was a memorable Instance ; as was likewise *Jethro*, the Priest of *Midian*, in the Days of *Moses* : We shall find, that the *Canaanites* of old were of the same Religion with *Abraham* ; for tho' he travell'd up and down many Years in their Country, yet was he respected by the Inhabitants of it, as a Person, in great Favour with God ; and *Melchisedeck*, the King of *Salem*, who was the *Priest of the most high God*, and consequently of the same Religion, received him with this Address ; (d) *Blessed be Abraham, Servant of the most high God, Possessor of Heaven and Earth* : We shall find, from *Abimelech's* Prayer, upon his receiving Intima-

From Gen. x.  
to the End ;  
and from Ch.  
xi. 10. to the  
End.

(b) Hyde's Reliq. Vet. Persarum, c. 3.

(c) Shackford's Connection, Vol. I. l. 5.

(d) Gen. xiv. 19.



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tion, that *Sarah* was *Abraham's* Wife, that, among the *Philistines*, there were some true Worshipers of the *God of Heaven*; (e) *Lord, Wilt thou slay a righteous Nation? Said he not unto me, she is my Sister; and she, even she herself, said, he is my Brother: In the Integrity of my Heart and Innocency of my Hands have I done this:* We shall find, that the *Egyptians* allowed no mortal Creature to be a God; profess'd to worship nothing, but their God *Cneph*, (f) whom they affirm'd to be without Beginning, and without End; and tho', in the Mythologick Times, (g) they represented this Deity by the Figure of a Serpent, with the Head of an Hawk in the Middle of a Circle, yet they affirmed, at the same Time, that the God, whom they thus represented, was the Creator of all Things, a Being incorruptible and eternal, with several other Attributes becoming the divine Nature: In short, we shall find, that all the Nations, then known in the World, not only worshipped the same God, whom they call'd the *Maker and Creator of the Universe*, but worshipped him likewise in the same Form and Manner; that they had all the like Sacrifices, either *expiatory*, to make Atonement for their Sins; *precatory*, to obtain Favours from Almighty God; *propitiatory*, to avert his Judgments; or *eucharistical*, to return thanks for his extraordinary Mercies; and that all these Sacrifices were every where offer'd upon *Altars*, with some previous Purifications, and other Ceremonies to be observ'd by the Offerer: So that Religion, in every Nation, for some Time after the Flood, both in Principle and Practice, was the same, till some busy and pragmatikal Heads, being minded to make some Improvements (as they thought) added their own Speculations to it, and so both destroy'd it's Uniformity, and introduc'd its Corruption.

WHEN this Corruption of Religion was first introduc'd, is not so easy a Matter to determine, because neither sacred nor profane History have taken any Notice of it. Those, (b) who account *Idolatry* one of the Sins of the *Antediluvian* World, suppose that *Ham*, being marry'd into the wicked Race of *Lamech*, retain'd a strong Inclination for such a false Worship; and that, after he was cursed by his Father *Noah*, and separated from the Posterity of *Shem*, he soon set it up. Those, (i) who imagine that the Tower of *Babel* was a Monument intended for the Honour of the *Sun*, which had dry'd up the Waters from off the Face of the Earth, must suppose, that the Worship of that *Planet* began, whilst the Remembrance of the Deluge was fresh in Men's Minds; but those, (k) who are of Opinion, that the Difference of Men's Dialects, and the Difference of their Sentiments concerning God might not improperly commence together, must date the first Institution of *Idolatry* not a great deal lower, than the Time of the Dispersion.

(l) THE Generality of *Christian* Fathers, as well as *oriental* Writers are positive in their Assertions, that the first Appearance of *Idolatry* was in the Days of *Serug*: "Because, as *Enoch*, say "they, was the seventh from *Adam*, "in whose Time the general Impiety, "before the Flood, is said to have began; "so *Serug*, being, in like Manner, the "seventh from *Noah*, liv'd at a proper "Distance, for such a Corruption of "religious Worship to be introduced, "and grow". But this is a Reason too trifling to be taken Notice of: Nor can I see, says our learned *Selden*, (m) how they can be able to maintain their Opinions, who determine so peremptorily, concerning a Matter of so distant and uncertain a Nature.

A a a a

B U T,

(e) Gen. xx. 5.  
l. 1. c. 10.

(f) *Plutarch* de *Iside & Osiride*, p. 359.  
(b) *Bedford's* Scripture Chronology, l. 2. c. 6.

(g) *Cyril. Alex. contra Julian*, l. 1.  
Syria, Proleg. 3.

(i) *Heidegger's* *Hist. Patriar.* Vol. II. Exer. 1.

(k) *Eusebius's* *Prep. Evan.*

(l) *Vid. Temison of Idolatry.*

(m) *De Diis*

Gen. Ch. x.  
to the End;  
and from Ch.  
xi. 10, to the  
End.

And Idolatry  
of these Times,  
when it began;



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BUT, whatever the Date of *Idolatry* might be, it is certain, that it had its first Birth, not in *Egypt*, (as some have maintain'd,) but in *Chaldea*, as the most reverend Author of the *Treatise of Idolatry* has evinc'd; (n) and that because, in the Days of *Abraham*, we find, all other Nations and Countries adhering to the true Account of the Creation and Deluge, and worshipping the God of Heaven, according to what had been revealed to them; whereas the *Chaldeans* had so far departed from his Worship, and were so zealous in their Errors and Corruptions, that, upon *Abraham's* Family refusing to join with them, they expell'd them their Country, and (o) cast them out from the Face of their Gods.

Celestial Bodies the first Idols in every Country.

THE *Chaldeans* indeed, by Reason of the plain and easy Situation of their Country, which gave them a larger Prospect of the heavenly Bodies, than those, who inhabited mountainous Places, had a great Conveniency for *astronomical* Observations, and, accordingly, were the first People, who took any great Pains to improve them. And, as they were the first *Astrologers*, (p) so learned Men have observ'd, that, lying on the Ground, or else on flat Roofs, all Night, to make their Observations, they fell in love with the *Lights of Heaven*, which, in the clear Firmament of those Countries, appear'd so often, and with so much Lustre; and, perceiving the constant and regular Order of their Motions, and Revolutions, they thence began to imagine, that they were animated with some superior Souls, and therefore deserv'd their Adoration; and as the Sun excell'd all the rest, so the Generality of learned Men have, with good Reason, imagin'd, that this bright *Luminary* was the first *Idol* in the World.

AMONG the *Egyptians*, (q) *Syphis*, King of *Memphis*, was the first, who began to speculate upon such Subjects. He examin'd what Influence the Sun and

Moon had upon the Terrestrial Globe; how they nourish'd, and gave Life and Vigour to all Things; and thereupon, forgetting what his Ancestors had taught him, viz. that in the Beginning God created the Heavens, as well as the Earth, the Sun and Moon, as well as the Creatures of this Lower World, he concluded, that they were two great and mighty Deities, and, accordingly, commanded them to be worshipp'd.

THE *Persians* perhaps (r) were never so far corrupted, as to lose entirely the Knowledge of the supreme God. They saw those celestial Bodies running their Courses, as they thought, Day and Night, over all the World, and reviving and invigorating all the Parts and Products of the Earth; and, tho' they kept themselves so far right, as not to mistake them for the true God, yet they imagin'd them to be his most glorious Ministers; and, not taking Care to keep strictly to what their Forefathers had taught them, they were led away, by their own Imaginations, to appoint an idolatrous Worship for Beings, that had been created, and by Nature were not Gods.

WHAT Kind of *Idolatry* was current among the *Canaanites*, *Moses* sufficiently intimates in the Caution, he gives the *Israelites*, just going to take Possession of it, viz. that (s) when they lifted up their Eyes to Heaven, and saw the Sun, and Moon, and Stars, even all the Host of Heaven, they shou'd not, as the Inhabitants of the Country were, be driven to worship, and to serve them: And that this was the customary Worship among the *Arabians*, the Justification, which *Job* makes of himself, is a sufficient Proof; (t) If I beheld the Sun, when it shin'd, or the Moon, walking in Brightness, and mine Heart hath been secretly entic'd, or my Mouth hath kiss'd my Hand, i. e. if, with Devotion of Soul, or Profession of outward Respect, I have worshipp'd those heavenly Bodies, which, by their Height, Motion,

From Gen. x. to the End; and from Ch. xi. 10. to the End.

(n) Shuckford's Connection, Vol. I. l. 5.  
dorus, l. 1.

(o) Hyde's Reliq. Vet. Persarum, c. 1.

(p) Judith v. 8.

(q) Temison of Idolatry.

(r) Dio-

(s) Deut. iv. 19.

(t) Job xxxi. 26, 27.



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Motion, and Lustre, attract the Eye, and ravish the Senses, *this also were an Iniquity to be punish'd by the Judges; for then I shou'd have deny'd the God, that is above.* And therefore the Account, (u) which the Greek Historian gives us of the Origin of this Kind of Idolatry, is more than probable, viz. *that the most antient Inhabitants of the Earth, (meaning those, who liv'd not long after the Flood, and particularly the Egyptians) contemplating on the World above them, and being astonish'd with high Admiration at the Nature of the Universe, believ'd, that they were eternal Gods, and that the two Principal of them were the Sun and the Moon; the former of which they called Osiris, and the latter Isis: Since, of later Years, upon the Discovery of America, tho' many different Idols were found in different Places, yet as for the Sun, it was the universal Deity, both in Mexico and Peru.*

The great Multiplicity of Idols.

BUT whatever the first Idol might be, it soon multiplied into such a prodigious Number, as to fill both Heaven and Earth with it's Progeny; insomuch that there are not three Parts of the Creation, but what, in one Nation or other, had their Worshippers. (x) They worshipp'd universal Nature, the Soul of the World, Angels, Devils, and the Souls of Men departed, either separate and alone, or in Union with some Star, or other Body. They worshipp'd the *Heavens*; and, in them, both particular Luminaries, and Constellations; the *Atmosphere*; and, in it, the Meteors, and Fowls of the Air; the *Earth*; and in it, Beasts, Birds, Insects, Plants, Groves, and Hills, together with divers Fossils, and Terrestrial Fire. They worshipp'd the *Water*; and, in it, the Sea, and Rivers; and, in them, Fishes, Serpents, and Insects, together with such Creatures, as live in either *Element*. They worshipp'd *Men*, both living and dead; and, in them, the Faculties, and Endowments of the Soul, as well as

the several Accidents and Conditions of Life. Nay, they worshipp'd the *Images* of Men; the Images of *Animals*, even the most hateful, such as Serpents, Dragons, Crocodiles, &c. and descended at last so low, as to pay a religious Regard to *Things inanimate*, Herbs, and Plants, and the most stinking Vegetables.

From Gen. x. to the End; and from Ch. xi. 10. to the End.

How Men came to part with the Religion of their Ancestors for such Trash, and (y) to change the Glory of the Incorruptible God, into the Image of corruptible Man, and Birds, and fourfooted Beasts, and creeping Things, the Apostle, who remonstrates to the Indignity, has, in some Measure, supply'd us with a Reason, when he tells, that this State of Things, how gross and strange soever it was, was introduc'd under the Pretences of Wisdom; or by Men *professing to be wise*.

How the World came to fall into this State.

It was the Wife amongst them, that formed the Design, and, addressing to the Multitude, with a grave Appearance, prevail'd (as we may conceive) by some such Form of arguing as this. (z) "We are all aware, ye Sons of *Noah*, that Religion is our chief Concern, and therefore it well becomes us to improve and advance it as much as possible. We have indeed receiv'd Appointments from God, for the Worship which he requires; but if these Appointments may be alter'd for his greater Glory, there is no doubt, but that it will be a commendable Piety so to alter them. Now our Father *Noah* has instructed us in a Religion, which, in Truth, is too simple, and too unaffecting: It directs us to the Worship of God, *abstractly* from all Sense, and under a *confus'd* Notion; under the Formality of *Attributes*, as Power, Goodness, Justice, Wisdom, Eternity, and the like; an Idea foreign to our Affections, as well as our Comprehensions: Whereas, in all Reason, we ought to worship God more *pomposly*, and more extensively, and not only to adore his *personal* and *essential* Attributes,

(u) *Diodorus Siculus*, l. 3. c. 11. Sermons, Vol. II. Sermon. 1.

(x) *Tennison* of Idolatry.

(y) *Roman*, l. 72, 73.

(z) *Young's*



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“ Attributes, but likewise all the *Em-*  
“ *nations* of them, and all those Crea-  
“ tures, by which they are eminently re-  
“ presented. Nor can this be any Dero-  
“ gation from his Honour; since his Ho-  
“ nour is certainly more amply express’d,  
“ when, in this Manner, we acknowledge,  
“ that not only *himself*, but all his Crea-  
“ tures likewise are adorable. We ought  
“ therefore (if we will be wise) to wor-  
“ ship the *Host of Heaven*, because they  
“ are eminent Representations of his  
“ *Glory* and *Eternity*: We ought to wor-  
“ ship the *Elements*, because they repre-  
“ sent his *Benignity* and *Omnipresence*:  
“ We ought to worship *Princes*, because  
“ they sustain a divine Character, and  
“ are the Representatives of his *Power*  
“ upon Earth: We ought to worship  
“ Men *famous in their Generation*, even  
“ when they are *dead*, because their  
“ Virtues are the distinguishing *Gifts*  
“ and Communications of God: Nay,  
“ we ought to worship the Ox and the  
“ *Sheep*, and whatever Creatures are most  
“ beneficial, because they are the Sym-  
“ bols of his *Love* and *Goodness*; and,  
“ with no less Reason, the *Serpent*, the  
“ *Crocodile*, and other Animals, that are  
“ noxious, because they are the Symbols  
“ of his *awful Anger*.”

THIS seems to be a fair Opening of the Project; and by some such cunning Harangue as this, we may suppose, it was, that the first Contrivers of Idolatry drew in the ignorant and admiring Multitude. And indeed, considering the natural Habit of vulgar Minds, and the strong Inclinations they have, in Matters of an *abstruse* Consideration, to help themselves by sensible Objects, it seems not so difficult a Task to have *drawn them in*.

The Motives,  
which engaged  
Men in it.

THOSE, who worshipp’d *universal Na-*  
*ture*, or the System of the material World, perceiv’d first, that there was Excellency in the several Parts of it, and then, (to make up the Grandeur and Perfection of the Idea) they join’d them altogether in one divine Being. Those, who labour’d

under a Weakness and Narrowness of Imagination, distributed Nature into its several Parts, and worshipp’d that Portion of it, which was accounted of most general Use and Benefit. *Usefulness* was the common Motive, but it was not the only Motive, which inclin’d the World to Idolatry: For, upon farther Enquiry, we shall find, that, whatever ravish’d with its transcendent Beauty, whatever affrighten’d with its malignant Power; whatever astonish’d with its uncommon Greatness; whatever, in short, was beautiful, hurtful, or majestick, became a *Deity*, as well as what was profitable for its Use. (a) The *Sun*, Men soon perceiv’d, had all these Powers and Properties united in it: Its *Beauty* was glorious to behold; its *Motion* wonderful to consider; its *Heat* occasion’d different Effects; Barrenness in some Places, and Fruitfulness in others; and the immense Globe of its Light appear’d highly exalted, and riding in Triumph, as it were, round the World. The *Moon*, they saw, supply’d the Absence of the Sun by Night; gave a friendly Light to the Earth; and, besides the great Variety of its *Phases*, had a wonderful Influence over the Sea, and other humid Bodies. The *Stars* they admir’d for their Height and Magnitude, the Order of their Positions, and Celerity of their Motions, and thence were persuaded, either that some celestial Vigour or other resided in them, or that the Souls of their *Heroes*, and great Men, were translated into them, when they died; and, upon these, and such like Presumptions, they accounted all celestial Bodies to be Deities. (b) The *Force* of Fire, the *Serenity* of Air, the *Usefulness* of Water, as well as the *Terror* and Dreadfulness of Thunder and Lightning, gave Rise to the Consecration of the *Meteors* and *Elements*. The *Sea*, swelling with its proud Surface, and roaring with its mighty Billows, was such an *awful* Sight, and the *Earth*, be- deck’d with all its Plants, Flowers, and Fruits, such a *lovely* one, as might well affect

From Gen. x.  
to the End;  
and from Ch.  
xi. 10. to the  
End.

(a) *Temple of Idolatry.*

(b) *Herbert's ancient Religion of the Gentiles.*



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affect a *Pagan's* Veneration ; when, for the like Motives, *viz.* their beneficial, hurtful, delightful, or astonishing Properties, Beasts, Birds, Fishes, Insects, and even Vegetables themselves, came to be ador'd.

The Rise of  
Image Wor-  
ship.

THE Pride and Pomp of the *Great*, and the low and abject Spirits of the *Mean*, occasion'd first the *Flattery*, and then the *Worship* of *Kings* and *Princes*, as Gods upon Earth. Men famous for their Adventures and Exploits, the Founders of Nations or Cities, or the Inventors of useful Arts and Sciences, were *reverenc'd*, while they liv'd ; and, after Death, *canoniz'd*. The prevailing Notion of the Soul's *Immortality* made them imagine, that the Spirits of such excellent Persons either immediately ascended up into Heaven, and settled there in some Orb or other ; or that they hover'd in the Air, whence, by solemn Invocations, and by making some Statue or Image resembling of them, they might be prevailed with to come down, and inhabit it.

WHETHER the Idolatry of Image-Worship was first begun in *Chaldea*, or in *Egypt*, we have no Grounds from History to determine : But wherever it had its Origin, the Design of making Statues and Images at first was certainly such, as the Author of the *Book of Wisdom* (c) has represented it, *viz.* to commemorate an absent or deceased Friend, or to do Honour to some great Man or sovereign Prince ; which, (whether so intended or no at first) the Ignorance and Superstition of the People turned, in Time, into an Object of religious Adoration ; the *singular Diligence of the Artificer* (as our Author expresses it) *helping to set forward the Ignorant to more Superstition : For he, peradventure, willing to please one in Authority, forced all his Skill to make the Resemblance of the best Fashion, and so the Multitude, allur'd by the Grace of the Work, took him now for a God, who, a little before, was but honour'd as a Man.*

WE cannot but observe however, with what Elegance and fine *Satire* it is, that the Scripture sets off the Stupidity, and gross Infatuation, both of the Artificer, and Adorer. *The Carpenter heweth down Cedars, and taketh the Cypress, and the Oak. He stretcheth out his Rule ; he marketh it out with a Line ; he fitteth it with Planes ; he marketh it out with the Compass, and maketh it after the Figure of a Man, according to the Beauty of a Man. — He burneth Part thereof in the Fire ; with Part thereof he eateth Flesh ; he roasteth Roast, and is satisfy'd ; yea he warmeth himself, and saith, Aba ! I am warm, I have seen the Fire ; and the Residue thereof he maketh a God, even his graven Image. He falleth down unto it, and worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me, for thou art my God ; never considering in his Heart, nor having Knowledge or Understanding to say, I have burnt Part of it in the Fire ; yea also I have baked Bread upon the Coals thereof : I have roasted Flesh, and eaten it ; And shall I make the Residue thereof an Abomination ? Shall I fall down to the Stock of a Tree ?*

From Gen. x. to the End ; and from Ch. xi. 10, to the End.

The gross Folly and Stupidity of it.

THAT rational Creatures should be capable of so wretched a Degeneracy, as this amounts to, may justly provoke our Wonder and Amusement : and yet we may remember, that these People (who may possibly be the Object of our Scorn and Contempt) had the boasted *Light of Nature* to be their Guide in Matters of Religion. Nay, they had some Advantages, that we apparently want : They lived much nearer the Beginning of the World ; had the Terrors of the Lord, in the late Judgment of the Deluge, fresh in their Minds ; had the Articles of their Religion comprised in a small Compass ; and (what is no bad Friend to Reason and sober Recollection) lived in more Simplicity, and less Luxury, than these later Ages can pretend to ; and yet, notwithstanding these Advantages, so sadly,

The Insufficiency of Reason to guide us in Matters of Religion.

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fo

(c) Ch. xiv. 15, &c.



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so shamefully did they miscarry, that the Wit of a Man would be at a Loss to devise a Reason for their Conduct, had not the divine Wisdom informed us, that (d) *they alienated themselves from the Light of God, and lightly regarded the Counsels of the Most High; that they forsook the Guide of their Youth, and rejected those Revelations, which, at sundry Times, and in divers Manners, were made to their Forefathers, for the Rule and Measure of their Faith and Practice.* We indeed, had we lived in those Days, may be apt to think, that we would not have been carried away with the common Corruption; that the Light of Nature would have taught us better, than to pay our Devotions to brute Beasts, or to look upon their Images as our Gods. But alas! we little consider, what the Power of Reason, of mere *unassisted* Reason, is against the Force of Education, and the Prevalence of Custom, engaged on the Side of a *false, but flashy, and popular* Religion. *Aristotle, Plato, and Cicero*, were, in after Ages, some of the greatest *Reasoners*, that the World has produced, and yet we find them complying with the established Worship of their Country: What Grounds have we then to imagine,

that, in Case we had been Contemporaries with them, we had acquitted ourselves any better? Our Reason indeed now tells us, that we would have died, rather than submitted to these impious Modes of Worship: But then we are to remember, that Reason is now *assisted* by the Light, and Authority of a divine *Revelation*; that therefore we are not competent Judges, how we should act without this superior Aid; but that, in all Probability, (e) taking away the Direction and Restraint of *this*, Reason would relapse into the same Extravagancies, the same Impiety, the same Folly and Superstition, which prevailed on it before. And therefore (to conclude in the Words of our blessed Saviour, spoken indeed upon *another*, but very applicable upon this Occasion) (f) *Blessed are the Eyes, which see the Things which ye see, a full and perfect Rule of Faith and Manners, contain'd in that HOLY BIBLE, which is in every one's Hands; for I tell you, that many Prophets and Kings have desired to see those Things, which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those Things, which ye hear, and have not heard them.*

From Gen. x. to the End; and from Ch. xi. 10, to the End.

(d) Eph. iv. 18.

(e) Rogers's Necessity of a Divine Revelation.

(f) Luke x. 23, 24.

### The End of the Second Book.



T H E





T H E  
H I S T O R Y  
O F T H E  
B I B L E.  
B O O K I I I.

*Containing an Account of Things, from the Calling of  
ABRAHAM, to the ISRAELITES Departure out of  
EGYPT. In all 430 Years.*

C H A P. I.

*Of the Life of Abraham, from his Call to his Death.*

*The H I S T O R Y.*



AFTER the Death of his Father *Terah, Abram*, who, by God's Appointment, had not long before left *Ur in Chaldea*,

was now order'd to leave *Haran*, and to go into a Country †, whereunto God wou'd conduct him, and who, at the same Time, gave him Assurance, that he wou'd bless, protect, and multiply his Posterity

From Gen. xii—xxv. 11.

† It is very probable, that this was done by some Appearance or other of the *Shekinah*, going before him, even as afterwards, his Posterity was conducted in the Way thither; since, passing over Rivers, climbing Mountains, and travelling through a dangerous and vast Desert he had certainly need of an extraordinary divine Direction, and of some sensible Exhibition or Token of it, while he had nothing but the Promise of God to support him, in so long, and so hazardous a Journey. *Bibliotheca Bib. Vol. I.*

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Abraham  
leaves his  
Country.



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Posterity in an extraordinary Manner, and that †, *in his Seed, all the Families of the Earth shou'd be blessed.*

ABRAHAM was fully persuaded of the Truth of all God's Promises: And therefore, without any Hesitation, taking his Wife and Family, and all his Effects, together with his Nephew *Lot*, and *his* Sub- stance with him, he pursu'd his Journey

(*not knowing whither he shou'd go*) until, by the divine Guidance †, he came into the Land of *Canaan*; and, being minded to make some Survey of the Country, proceeded † to the famous *Oak of Moreh*, not far from the City of *Sichem*, then || inhabited by the *Canaanites*. Here he took up his Abode for some Time, and here built an Altar, in order to pay his Devotions

From Gen.  
xii—xxv. 11.

† Some Interpreters have imagin'd, that these Words require no higher Sense than this,—That all Nations shou'd see the Prosperity of *Abraham* and his Seed, so evidently, that they shou'd bless themselves, and others, in some such Form as this:—*God make thee as great as Abraham and his Seed.* But, besides the Incongruity of supposing, that God's *everlasting Covenant* (as he calls it, Gen. xvii. 19.) was given only to produce a *proverbial* Form of Speech, 'tis plain Matter of Fact, that the Posterity of *Abraham*, in the Line of *Isaac*, was far from being the most prosperous (as to temporal Affairs) of all the other Branches of his Family; and therefore this Promise must of necessity be suppos'd to relate to some more *spiritual* and distant Blessing, just as *St Paul*, in his Epistle to the *Galatians*, has explained it: *Now to Abraham and his Seed were the Promises made, he saith not, and to Seeds, as of many, but of one, and to thy Seed, which is Christ*, Gal. iii. 16. Vid. Bishop *Sherlock's* Use and Intent of Prophecy.

† The Land of *Canaan* lies between the *Mediterranean-Sea* and the Mountains of *Arabia*, and extends from *Egypt* to *Phœnicia*. It is bounded *to the East*, by the Mountains of *Arabia*; *to the South*, by the Wilderness of *Paran*, *Idumea*, and *Egypt*; *to the West*, by the *Mediterranean*, called, in *Hebrew*, the *Great Sea*; and *to the North*, by the Mountains of *Libanus*. Its Length from the City of *Dan* (since called *Cæsarea Philippi*, or *Paneadis*, which stands at the Foot of these Mountains) to *Beer-sheba*, is about seventy Leagues, and its Breadth, from the *Mediterranean-Sea* to the *Eastern Borders*, is, in some Places, thirty. It was first called the Land of *Canaan*, from *Cainan*, the Son of *Ham*, whose Posterity possessed it. It was afterwards called *Palestine*, from the People, which the *Hebrews* call *Philistines*, and the *Greeks* and *Romans* corruptly *Palestines*, who inhabited the *Sea-coasts*, and were first known to them. It likewise had the Name of the *Land of Promise*, from the Promise God made *Abraham* of giving it to him; that of the *Land of Israel*, from the *Israelites* having made themselves Masters of it; that of *Judah*, from the Tribe of *Judah*, which was the most considerable of the twelve; and lastly, the Happiness, it had of being sanctified by the Presence, Actions, Miracles, and Death of *Jesus Christ*, has given it the Name of the *Holy Land*, which it retains to this Day. *Lamy's* Introduction.

† The City of *Sichem*, or *Sechem*, or *Sychar*, (for it had all these Names) was, at this Time, so called by Way of *Anticipation*, (for as yet, it was not founded) is a Town of *Samaria*, in the Borders of *Ephraim*, which stands in a narrow Valley, between *Gerazim* on the *South*, and *Ebal* on the *North*, being built at the Foot of the former. At present it is called *Naplosa*, and consists only of two Streets, lying parallel under Mount *Gerazim*, and is far from being in the flourishing Condition, it was once, tho' it is still full of People, and the Seat of a *Bassa*. The true Name which was given it by *Abram*, was *Moreh*, or *Allon Moreh*, which our Translation renders the *Plain of Moreh*; by *St Jerom*, the *illustrious Vale*; by the *Jerusalem Targum*, the *Valley of Vision*, because of God's appearing to *Abraham* here; and by others, the *Oak of Moreh*, or the illustrious Oak, &c. tho' it seems very probable, that there was in this Place, not only one single Tree, but a whole Grove of them, and therefore it is called *Allon*, or *Aulon*, being a Corruption from *Elon*, in *Latin* *Esculetum*; i. e. an *Oaken Grove*, or Forests of Ever-green Oaks: And since this was the Place, where *Abraham*, at his first Coming into the Country, built an Altar, we have great Reason to be of the same Opinion with the learned and sagacious Mr *Mede*, viz. that this *Allon-Moreh*, was a Place of divine Worship, a *Proseucha*, or open Oratory, in Imitation of which, the *Jeauish Proseuchæ* (which were certain Spaces of Ground, with an Altar in the midst, encompassed with a Wall, or some other Enclosure, and open above, but shaded with Trees) in after Ages, were set up. Vid. *Wells's* Geography of the New Testament, Vol. I. and *Biblioth. Bib.* Vol. I. Occas. Annot. 13, where the Reader may meet with a particular Enumeration, upon how many Accounts more, this Place was, in former Times, very famous.

|| The Words in the Text are, — *Abram passed through the Land unto the Place of Sichem, unto the Plain of Moreh, and the Canaanite was then in the Land*: From whence some have raised an Objection, that *Moses* could not be the Author of this Book of *Genesis*, because the Words seem to import, that the Writer of them lived after that the *Canaanites* were drove out of the Land, which was after *Moses's* Death. But, in answer to this, it may be observed, that, as by *the Land* here, we are not obliged to understand the *whole* Country, but only that *Part* of it, which lay about *Sichem*, so by the *Canaanite*, we need not mean the whole Posterity of *Canaan*, or all the *Canaanitish* Tribes, but only one particular Tribe of them, as in the very next Chapter, Ver. 7. is more distinctly expressed. And the Reason, why this is taken notice of by the sacred Historian, is best accounted for in that ancient Tradition in *Epiphanius*. [Hæres. 66. N. 84.] if we will allow it to be true, viz. that, according to the original Settlement and Distribution among the Sons of *Noah*, *Palestine* was not allotted to any of the Sons of *Ham*, but was usurped by *Canaan* from the Children of *Shem*, to whom it did of Right belong; so that these Words, *the Canaanite was then in the Land*, signify, that they had already invaded the Land, before *Abram* came thither, and therefore God's promising to give it him was only in order to restore that to the Posterity of *Shem*, which the Children of *Ham* had wrongfully seized. *Patrick's* Commentary, and *Biblioth. Bib.* Vol. I.



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Devotions to God; who, pleas'd with his Behaviour, appear'd to him again (as he had done at *Haran* before) and gave him fresh Assurances of his Favour, and a Promise inviolable, that, in Process of Time, the whole Land, where he then dwelt, shou'd be the Portion of his Posterity.

Goes into  
Egypt.

FROM *Sichem* he remov'd † into the mountainous Country, which lies between *Bethel* and *Hai*, where he likewise built an Altar for a Place of divine Worship (as he did in all other Countries where he came) and from *Beth-el*, he was travelling farther to the *South*, when he was stopp'd by a Famine, which grew grievous in the Land, and oblig'd him to go down to \* *Egypt*, the only Place for Provision in such like Exigences. But as he came to the Confines of *Egypt*, he began to be not a little uneasy upon the Account of his Wife, who, (tho' she had pass'd the sixty-fifth Year of her Age) retain'd still Beauty enough to endanger the Man's Life, who shou'd pass for her Husband in that Country. And therefore, after some Deliberation, concluding, that the safest Way wou'd be for her to conceal her Marriage, he took an Opportunity to acquaint her with his Fears, and, with a small Entreaty, prevail'd with her, in all Places where they were to sojourn, to go under the Notion of his *Sister*.

THEY had not been long in *Egypt*, before *Abram's* Fears were found to be true.

From Gen.  
xii—xxv. 11.

His Wife's Charms had captivated several, and her Beauty was become the common Topick of Conversation; infomuch, that, in a short Time, it reached the Court, and the high Commendations, which every one gave the King of it, rais'd his Curiosity to see this amiable Stranger. Immediately therefore she was brought to Court, and taken in to the King's Apartment, as design'd for one of his Royal Concubines; while her pretended Brother was treated with great Civility for her Sake, and loaded with many valuable Presents from the King.

It is hardly to be imagin'd, what a sad Distress both the Patriarch and his Comfort must have been in, upon this Occasion. She was a beautiful Woman, in the Power of a loose and vitious Prince, and destitute of all Protection, but God's; and her Lord not so much as daring to own her his Wife, knowing how certain and sudden must be the Destruction of an helpless Man, that provokes Passion and Power, Rage of Lust, and Security of gratifying it.

WHILE Matters were in this dangerous Position, the Providence of God interpos'd in her Behalf, and, to deter † *Pharaoh* and his Nobles from any dishonourable Attempts upon her Virtue, † infested them

C c c c

with

† What our Author here means, is Mount *Ephraim*, which lay between *Bethel*, a Town, not far from *Jerusalem*, Northwards, and *Hai*, which is situate towards the West of *Bethel*. *Well's* Geography, Vol. I.

\* *Josephus* tells us, that, "*Abraham*, understanding that there was a great Plenty in *Egypt*, resolv'd upon a Journey thither; not only to partake of their Plenty, but also to consult the Priests in their Profession in divine Matters, with an impartial Desire and Disposition to find out the Truth, and either to give, or receive Satisfaction, according as the Subject in Question did require; that here he gained himself infinite Credit, not only for the Solidity of his Judgment, and an admirable Felicity of Elocution, but for his instructive Talent of informing, and convincing his Hearers at once; and that here he read Lectures of *Astronomy* and *Arithmetick*, which the *Egyptians* understood nothing of, until *Abraham* brought them with him out of *Chaldee* into *Egypt*, from whence they passed into *Greece*." *Antiq.* l. i. c. 9.

† *Pharaoh* was the common Name for all the *Egyptian* Kings, for above 3300 Years (as *Josephus* tells us, *Antiq.* l. 8. c. 2.) but what its proper Etymology is, the Learned are not so well agreed. *Bochart* thinks, that the Word *Pharaoh* signifies a *Crocodile*, and that *Ezekiel* alludes to it in these Words. *Behold I am against thee, Pharaoh, King of Egypt, the great Dragon, that lieth in the midst of the River*, *Ezek.* xxix. 3. *M. Le Clerc* fancies, that the Arabick Word *Pharaoh*, to be raised on high, or to be superior to, is the true Root of the Name. *Kircher* does indeed derive the Word from the same Root, but will have it to signify to deliver, or to free; and that *Pharaoh* therefore signifies to be exempt from the Jurisdiction of the Laws. And (to name no more) the learned *Renanot* thinks, that *Pharaoh* is the same with the *Egyptian* *Pourro*, or *Pooro*, which signifies a King. *Calmet* on the Word.

† Some of the *Hebrew* Interpreters think, that they had grievous Ulcers in their secret Parts, which made both him and them, incapable of enjoying either her, or any other Woman: And, in the Punishment inflicted upon *Abimelech*,  
and



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with such Plagues, as made them not insensible upon whose Account it was that they suffered; even upon hers, who, tho' she passed for a *single*, was in reality a married Woman: So that the King, immediately calling for *Abram*; expostulated with him the ill Consequences, that might have ensu'd from the Method he had taken; and, after some few Exprobations, returned him his Wife, and gave Orders, that they might safely depart his Kingdom, without any the least Molestation, either to their Persons, or Possessions.

Upon his Return, he and Lot part.

ABRAM, after this, tarried not long in *Egypt*: For, understanding that the Famine was ceas'd in *Canaan*, he returned thither by the same Way, and on the Altar, which he had built before, offer'd a Sacrifice of Thanks for his happy Escape, and safe Return. *Lot* and *Abram* had hitherto liv'd together; but, by this Time, their Substance was so much encreas'd, that they found it inconvenient to be any

longer near one another. Their Cattle mingled; † their Herdsmen quarrell'd; and their Flocks, when together, requir'd a larger Tract of Ground, to feed and support them, than they cou'd take up, without interfering with the Property of the Inhabitants of the Land, wherein they sojourn'd. Upon these Considerations, *Abram* resolv'd, in a friendly Manner, to separate from *Lot*; and, having given him his Choice of the whole Country, that lay before him, *Lot* chose the fertile and pleasant Plains of *Sodom* and *Gomorrab*, † which he saw were well watered by the Streams of *Jordan*, and so parted from his Uncle. *Abraham* continuing, for some Time, in the Place where *Lot* had left him, had a Vision imparted to him, wherein God was pleased to renew the Promise of enlarging his Posterity; and, bidding him cast his Eyes round the Horizon, confirm'd the Gift of all the Land, which he beheld, to him and his Posterity. Not long

From Gen.  
xii—xxv. 11.

and his People, upon the same Account, *Gen. xx. 18.* they suppose, that there were such Swellings in their privy Parts, as that the Men could neither enjoy their Wives, nor the Women, who were with Child, be delivered. *Patrick's Commentary.*

† The *Jews* here tell us, that the Herdsmen of *Abraham* were commanded by their Master not to go near the *Canaanites*, or the *Perizzites*, nor to come into the Grounds, which they had taken, either for Culture or Pasture, that so they might not appear to do the least Injury to any of them; and that, in Obedience to his Command, they took especial Care to confine all their Cattle, and to watch their Flocks with a strict Eye, that none might go astray, and so trespass upon the Natives; but that *Lot's* Herdsmen were herein very negligent, and suffered their Cattle to go beyond their Bounds, and to feed in the Fields, which belonged to the *Canaanites*, and *Perizzites*, who dwelt then in the Land, and claimed the Sovereignty of it. *Bibliotheca Bibl. Vol. I.*

† The Words in the Text are these, — *The Plain of Jordan was well watered every where, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrab (even like the Garden of the Lord, like the Land of Egypt) as thou goest to Zoar.* The last Clause, *as thou goest to Zoar*, has much perplexed Commentators, whilst they refer it to the Land of *Egypt*, in the Clause immediately preceeding; whereas, if what is said by Way of Comparison of the Plain of *Jordan* to the Garden of the Lord, *i. e.* the Garden of *Eden*, and to the Land of *Egypt*, be understood as inserted by way of Parenthesis, the Difficulty will be taken away, and the Import of the last Clause will be plain and easy; for then the Meaning of the Verse will amount to this, — “That, before the Lord destroyed *Sodom* and *Gomorrab*, the Plain of *Jordan* was well watered every where, as thou comest unto *Zoar*,” *i. e.* in the Parts where *Sodom* and *Gomorrab* stood, or, in short, in the Vale of *Siddim*. But there is another Interpretation, which supposes the Word *Zoar* to be a false Reading for *Zoan*, a City, that was once the Capital of *Egypt*, situate at the lower Part of the River *Nile*, where it divides itself into several Branches, and so waters the Country more plentifully thereabouts, than in any other Parts. According to which Reading, the Import of the Verse will be this, — That the Plain of *Jordan* was well watered every where about *Sodom* and *Gomorrab*, before the Lord destroyed them; yea, the Plain was so well watered, that it was, in this respect, as the Garden of *Eden*, or as the Land of *Egypt*, and particularly as thou goest to *Zoan*, *i. e.* in the Parts about *Zoan*, where the *Nile* is divided into several Branches. *Wells's Geography of the Old Testament, Vol. I.* The River *Jordan*, which runs thro' this Plain, is of so great Note in the sacred Writings, that we must not pass it by without this Observation, — That it derives its Name (as some assert) from the Hebrew Word *Jor*, which signifies a Spring, and *Dan*, which is a small Town, near the Source of this River. But the Misfortune is, that the Name of *Dan* is much more modern, than that of *Jordan*. From its Source, which we suppose to be at *Casarea Philippi*, it runs thro' a Space of about 50 Leagues, till it discharges itself into the *Dead-Sea*, otherwise called the *Asphaltite Lake*, where *Sodom* and *Gomorrab*, and the other Cities of the Plain, that were destroyed with Fire from Heaven, once stood. About five or six Leagues Distance from its Spring, it forms the Lake *Semeehon*, and from thence it enters the Lake of *Tiberias*; passes quite thro' it, and so is quite lost in the *Dead Sea*. Its Water, in Summer-time, is very shallow; but, about the Time of the Barley-harvest, or the Feast of the *Passover*, it constantly overflows its Banks, and greatly fructifies the Plain. *Calmer's Dictionary.*



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1921, &c.

long after this, he left *Beth-el*, and went to dwell at † the *Oak of Mamre*, which is not far from *Hebron*, where he built an Altar unto the Lord, and, in a short Time, contracted an Acquaintance with three of the greatest Men there, *Mamre*, *Aner*, and *Eſcol*; the first of whom communicated his Name to all the Country.

Vanquishes  
Chedorlaomer's Army.

THIS Alliance prov'd very serviceable to him, but more especially upon the following Occasion. † *Chedorlaomer*, King of *Elam*, had held five petty Princes in a tributary Subjection to him for some Years, of which Number the King of *Sodom* was one. At length they shook off their Yoke, and confederated against him; which provoked him (in Conjunction with three other Kings, his Allies) to march directly with a powerful Army against them. The revolted Kings, seeing the Enemy drawing towards them, took the Field with a Resolution to try the Fate of a *pitch'd* Battle. The Valley of *Siddim* was the Place where the Armies were to meet, and as it was full of Pits of *Bitumen*, it might have made the Engagement more difficult and dangerous to the Enemies Horse: But so it was, † that the five Kings were put to the Rout; one Part of their Army was cut in Pieces, and the other fled to the neighbouring Mountains, leaving their

Cities a Prey to the Conquerors. *Lot*, who, at this Time resided at *Sodom*, was involv'd in the Calamity of the City; was plundered of all he had, and himself carried away among the rest of the Captives. As soon as *Abram* had Intelligence of this by an express Messenger, he immediately sends to his three Friends, desiring their Assistance at this critical Juncture; and putting himself at the Head of three Hundred and eighteen of his own Domesticks, all well prepar'd, and Men of Resolution, he began his Pursuit, and, after a March of almost seventy Leagues, coming up with the Enemy, and dividing his Forces into small Parties, he fell upon them by Night, and, charging them on all Sides at once, put them in such a Terror and Consternation, that they took to their Heels, and fled, leaving all the Booty and Captives behind them, among whom he happily recovered *Lot*, and brought him back with all his Substance to his former Habitation.

From Gen.  
xii—xxv. 11.

THE first Person, who came to congratulate *Abraham* upon this Victory, was the King of *Sodom*, (very probably the Son of him, (a) who perished in the Slime-pits) who, in thankful Acknowledgment of the Benefits, he had received from his Valour and Assistance, offered him all the Booty,

Is congratulated hereupon.

† What we translate the *Plain*, should be rendered, the *Oak of Mamre*; because the Word *Elon* signifies an *Oak*, or Tree of long Duration: *Saxomen* tells us, that this Tree was still extant, and famous for Pilgrimages, and annual Feasts, even in *Constantine's* Time; that it was about six Miles distant from *Hebron*; that some of the Cottages, which *Abraham* built, were still standing near it; and that there was a Well likewise of his digging, whereunto both *Jews*, *Christians*, and *Heathens*, did, at certain Seasons, resort, either out of Devotion, or for Trade; because there was held a great Mart. As for *Hebron*, or *Chebron*, it was accounted one of the most ancient Cities in the World; having been built seven Years before *Tanis*, the Capital of *Lower Egypt*. It was situated upon an Eminence, Twenty Miles Southward from *Jerusalem*, and Twenty Miles North from *Beerſheba*, and had its Name, very probably, from the Word *Chavar*, to couple, or join; because these married Couples, *Abraham* and *Sarah*, *Isaac* and *Rebecca*, *Jacob* and *Leah* were buried there. *Calmet's* Dictionary, and *Universal History* in the Notes, l. 1. c. 7.

† We meet no where in profane History with the Name of *Chedorlaomer*, nor with any of those Names of the Kings, that were confederate with him: And the Reason hereof is, that *Ctesias*, (from whom the profane Historians took the Names of these Kings) did not use their original *Affyrian* Names in his History, but rather such as he found in the *Persian* Records. However, since the Date of this Transaction falls four Years before the Death of *Ninyas*, there are good Grounds to infer, that *Ninyas*, who then lived in *Persia*, was the *Chedorlaomer* of *Moses*, at that Time the Head of the *Affyrian* Monarchy; that *Amraphel* was his Deputy at *Babylon* in *Shinear*; and *Arioch* and *Tidal* his Deputies over some other adjacent Countries: For it is remarkable, that *Ninyas* was the first, who appointed under him such Deputies; nor is there any Absurdity in *Moses* to call them *Kings*, since it is observable, from what *Isaiah* hinted afterwards, (Ch. x. 8.) that the *Affyrian* boasted his Deputy-princes to be equal to royal Governors, *Are not my Princes altogether Kings?* *Shuckford's* Connection, Vol. II. l. 6.

† As the Text tells us, that the Kings of *Sodom* and *Gomorrab* fell into some of the *Slime-pits*, with which the Valley of *Siddim* abounds, and takes no Notice of their coming out of them, it is more rational to suppose, that they perished there, than that *Abraham* stayed to take them up, as the *Jews* vainly imagine; and that therefore the King of *Sodom*, who afterwards came out to congratulate *Abraham*, must have been the Son of the Deceased.

(a) Gen. xiv. 10.



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Booty, which he had retaken, and desir'd only his Subjects, the Prisoners, to be restor'd. But *Abram* was too generous to take the Advantage of the Misery of War; and therefore, saving to his *Confederates* such a Proportion of the Plunder, as, by the Law of Arms, belonged to them, he returned all the rest, both *Prisoners* and *Goods*, to the King of *Sodom*, having before resolved to keep no Part of them, that it might be said, he undertook that Enterprize, not for any private Advantage, but purely for the *publick Good*, which every Man of Honour should have always *primarily* in his View.

THE next, who congratulated him upon this Occasion, was *Melchizedeck*, King of *Salem*; who, upon his Return from the Battle, had provided Plenty of all Things necessary for his Refreshment, and his Mens in their March; and, as he was a *Priest*, as well as King, he both blessed *Abram*, for being the Instrument of so publick a Deliverance in the Hands of God, and God himself, who had given him such uncommon Success to his Arms; whereupon *Abram*, in Return, presented him with the *tenth Part* of the Spoils, which he had taken from the Enemy in this Expedition.

*ABRAM's* Deportment, upon this Occasion, was so very acceptable to God, that he was pleas'd to appear to him again in a Vision, and to give him fresh Assurances of his special Favour, and of his Intention to be his *Shield of Defence*, in all Dangers, and, for all the good Acts, which he perform'd, his exceeding great Reward.

HITHERTO indeed the Patriarch had listen'd to God's Promises, without any Expression of Distrust; but, upon this fresh Assurance, he ventured, for the first Time, to expostulate with him, not knowing how these things possibly could be accomplish'd, whilst himself continu'd *Childless*, and, to all Appearance, must be obliged to leave the Bulk of his Substance to *Eleazar*, his Household-Steward. This indeed was a modest Way to try whether God designed to bless him with a Child; and God did not leave him long in Suspence. He told him, that not his Servant, but a Son of his own, begotten of his Body, should be his Heir, and should have a Race, descending from him, as *innumerable as the Stars*.

THIS was such joyful News, as gave *Abram* fresh Courage, even to request of God some sensible and visible Token, whereby he might be assur'd of this Blessing; And accordingly God was pleas'd to comply with his Request. That therefore they might enter into a formal Covenant upon this Occasion, he ordered him to take an *Heifer*, a *Goat*, and a *Ram*, of three Years old each, with a *Pigeon* and a *Turtle-dove*, and to offer them up. *Abram* did as he was ordered: And, having killed the four-footed Beasts, he † cut them in two, and laid the Halves, at proper Distances, directly opposite to each other, but the Fowls he left whole; and so, passing between the dissected Bodies, (as the Manner of Covenanting then was) he made his solemn Vows of perpetual Obedience to God; and then sitting down, in Expectance

From Gen.  
xii—xxv. 11.  
Is promis'd a  
Son.

Enters into  
Covenant with  
God.

† The only Place, besides this, where we have any Intimation given us of this Custom of making Covenants, by dividing the Beasts then to be sacrificed, and by the Parties, who covenanted, passing between the Parts of the Beast so divided, is in *Jer. xxxiv. 18, 19.* *I will give the Men, that have transgressed my Covenant, which have not performed the Words of the Covenant, which they had made before me, when they cut the Calf in twain, and passed between the Parts thereof; the Princes of Judah, and the Princes of Jerusalem, the Eunuchs, and the Priests, and all the People of the Land, which passed between the Parts of the Calf; I will even give them into the Hand of their Enemies, and into the Hand of them, that seek their Life; and their dead Bodies shall be for Meat unto the Fowls of the Heaven, and unto the Beasts of the Earth.* This certainly was a very antient Custom: And, accordingly, we find in *Homer*, that *ῥεῖνα πρὸς ταμόνῃς* is a very common Phrase, upon which his Commentator, *Eustathius*, has this Observation: *Διὰ τοιαύτης ζώων θυσιμένων οἱ ἐπὶ μεγάλαις ὄρεσι ἡγίνοντο*, that in Matters of great Moment, Oaths, or Covenants, were generally made by dividing the Animals, which, upon such Occasions, were sacrific'd; and the Design of this Rite (as the learned *Meade*, in a Discourse upon the Subject, has expressed it) was as much as to say, *Thus let me be divided, and cut in Pieces, if I violate the Oath, which I have now made in the Presence of God.* *Patrick's*, and *Le Clerc's* Commentaries.



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2083, &c.  
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1921, &c.

Expectance of what God would do on his Part, he took Care to drive away all Birds of Prey from settling upon the Sacrifice.

As soon as the Sun began to set, a deep Sleep, \* attended with an horrible Darkness, and Dread of Spirits, fell upon him; during which, it was revealed to him, that he was not to expect an immediate Accomplishment of the divine Promises; for tho' † himself was to die in Peace, and in a good old Age, yet his Posterity were, after that, to sojourn, and be afflicted in a strange Country, † for the Space of four hundred Years; at the Expiration of which, God would punish their Oppressors, and conduct them safe to the Land, which he had promis'd them. And, for his Confirmation in this, he caus'd the Symbol of

his divine Presence, viz. † a smoking Furnace, and a burning Lamp, to pass between the divided Pieces of the Victims, and consume them, in Ratification of his Part of the Covenant.

TEN Years had Sarah expected the Performance of God's Promise, and judging now, by the Course of Nature, that her Husband's Issue must proceed from some other Woman, and not from her own Body, she prevail'd with him to take her Handmaid † Hagar to be his secondary Wife, pleasing herself with the Thoughts, that, if her Maid shou'd conceive by her Husband, the Child would be reputed hers, and her House be establish'd in the Completion of the divine Promise.

From Gen.  
xii—xxv. 11.

Has a Son by  
Hagar.

It was not long before Hagar accordingly did conceive; and, forgetting now the

\* That Horror and Dread of Spirits does frequently seize on those, who see Visions, is evident from what Daniel tells us of himself, *I was left alone, and saw this great Vision, and there remained no Strength in me; for my Comeliness was turned in me into Corruption, and I retained no Strength*: [Ch. x. 8.] but the Description, which we have in Job of this Matter, is, in itself very awful and affecting. *In Thoughts from the Visions of the Night, when deep Sleep falleth on Men, Fear came upon me, and Trembling; which made all my Bones to shake. Then a Spirit passed before my Face, the Hair of my Flesh stood up. It stood still, but I could not discern the Form thereof; an Image was before mine Eyes, there was Silence, and I heard a Voice*, Ch. iv. 13, &c.

† The Expression in the Text is, *Thou shalt go to thy Fathers in Peace*, which some will have to be no more, than an Oriental Phrase for going to the Grave: but since it cannot be said of Abraham, that he did, in this Sense, go to his Fathers (for as much as his Body was so far from being laid with them in the Sepulchre, that it was deposited in a Country, that had no Manner of Communication with that of his Fathers) it must be allowed, that, from this Text, an Argument may justly be drawn for the separate Existence of human Souls. The Expression however, of going to our Fathers, seems to have been formed from some such Notion as this, — That the Souls of the Deceased do go to a certain Place, where those of the same Family, or same Nation at least, are supposed to live together, and in Communion: which Notion certainly arises from that natural Desire, which all Men, who think their better Part immortal, have to see and converse with such of their Relations or Countrymen, as have left behind them a great and lasting Fame. For, if the Soul of Socrates, says one, were permitted to go where it desired, it would certainly associate with the Worthies of Greece, with Orpheus, Musæus, Homer, and those ancient Demi-gods, who, in several Generations, were so renowned. Vid. Le Clerc's Commentary, and Biblioth. Bib. Vol. I. in Locum.

† Expositors have been very much divided in their Opinions, how to make it out, that Abraham's Posterity was in a State of Servitude and Affliction for the Space of four hundred Years: It may be observed however, that all this Difficulty is removed, if we suppose, that their State of Affliction is to be reckoned from the Time of Isaac's Birth, which, to the Deliverance out of the Egyptian Bondage, was just four hundred and five Years; but the five odd Years are therefore not mentioned, because it is a common Custom among all Writers, to take no Notice of broken Numbers, (as they call them) when they Name a round Sum. And, if there be supposed a farther Difficulty, in that their Sojourn is (in Exod. xii. 40.) said to have continu'd four hundred and thirty Years; in these Years, the Time of Abraham's sojourn (which was exactly twenty-five Years, from his Coming into the Land of Canaan to the Birth of Isaac) may be comprehended, and then all the Difficulty vanishes; because these twenty-five Years, added to the four hundred and five before mentioned, exactly make up the four hundred and thirty. Patrick's Commentary.

† By this Symbol God design'd to represent to Abraham either the future State of his Posterity, the smoking Furnace signifying Israel's Misery in the Land of Egypt, and the burning Lamp, their happy Escape and Deliverance; or (what seems more probable) to notify his own immediate Presence, since both Smoak and Fire are, in several Parts of Scripture, mention'd, as Emblems and Representations of the divine Appearance. And therefore, as it was a Thing customary, and especially in Chaldea (from whence Abraham came) for Persons, covenanting together, to pass between the Pieces of the Sacrifice; so God, who had no Body to do it visibly for him, did it in this Type and Emblem. Pool's Annot. and Bibliotheca Bib. in Loc.

† In Concubinage, these secondary, or Wives of a lower Order, were accounted lawful and true Wives; had an equal Right to the Marriage-bed with the chief Wife, and their Issue was reputed as legitimate; but, in all other respects, they were inferior. And as they had no Authority in the Family, nor any Share in Household Government; so, if they had been Servants in the Family, before they came to be Concubines, they continued in that State afterwards, and in the same Subjection to their Mistress, as before. Howell's History of the Bible.



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the former Condition of her Life, she began to value herself upon it, and to treat her Mistress with Insolence and ill Manners. *Sarai*, impatient to see herself insulted by a Slave, cou'd not forbear breaking out into bitter Complaints against her to her Husband; but he, willing to make her easy, and withal to discountenance any disrespectful Carriage towards her, left her to treat her Maid just as she pleas'd. This Licence gave *Sarai* an Opportunity of expressing her Resentment with too much Severity, which the other not able to bear, She stole from her Master's House, and was making the best of her Way to her own Country, which was *Egypt*; when, in her Travels thro' the Wilderness, meeting with a Fountain, she tarried to rest, and refresh herself there. As she was revolving her Sorrows in her Mind, an Angel came to her, and, after some previous Questions, advis'd her to return Home, and be subject to her Mistress, because it wou'd not be long before she shou'd be delivered of a Son (whom he order'd her to Name † *Ishmael*) whose Posterity wou'd be very numerous, a stout and warlike People, living upon Plunder in the Desarts, and apt to annoy others, tho' not easily vanquished themselves.

*HAGAR*, hearing this comfortable News, was soon perswaded to take the Angel's Advice, and, in Memory of this surprizing Vision, having call'd first the Fountain where she sat *Beer-lahai-roi*, which signifies, *the Well of him, that lives and sees me*, she made what haste she cou'd Home, and, in a short Time, after her

Return, was deliver'd of a Son, according to the Angel's Promise.

From Gen.  
xii—xxv. 11.

At the Birth of *Ishmael*, *Abram* was 86 Years old; and, lest in the Excess of his Joy, he should mistake this Child for the Heir of the Promises, which had been made to him, about thirteen Years after, God renew'd his Covenant with him; instituted the Rite of Circumcision upon a severe Penalty; changed † his Name from *Abram* to *Abraham*, and his Wife's from *Sarai* to † *Sarah* (where the Difference in Sense is much more, than in Sound) and, (to compleat his Happiness) gave him a Promise, that his Wife *Sarah* should bear him a Son. This seem'd a Thing so strange, and almost impossible, that *Abraham*, falling on his Face, began to intercede for the Life and Preservation of *Ishmael*, as thinking it unreasonable to ask, or wish for any Thing more; but the Almighty soon assur'd him, that these great Blessings were not design'd for *Ishmael*, but for a Son to be born of the once-barren *Sarah*, (and therefore to be named † *Isaac*) which wou'd certainly come to pass within the Compass of a Year. That he might not however seem wholly to neglect his Request for *Ishmael*, he promis'd to make him a great Nation, and the Father of twelve Princes, tho' the Son begotten of *Sarah* shou'd only be entitled to the Covenant and Promise of *making all the Nations of the Earth blessed*. This was the Purport of the Vision; and, as soon as it was ended, *Abraham* delayed not (according to the divine Command) to circumcise himself, his Son, and all the Males in his

Is promis'd one  
by Sarah.

Family;

† *Ishmael* is compounded of the Words *Jishmag* and *El*, the Lord *bath*, or the Lord *will bear*: And the Reason of the Name is immediately subjoined by the Angel, namely, *because the Lord had heard her Complaint*.

† *Abram*, is compounded of two Hebrew Words, *Ab*, and *Ram*, which signify *high Father*; and *Abraham* is commonly derived from three, namely, *Ab-Ram-Hamon*, *the Father of a great Multitude*. But this is forced and ungrammatical, having nothing to support it, but only the Reason, which God gives in the Text, for changing *Abram* into *Abraham*, viz. because he was to make of him a Father of many Nations, as indeed he was; for not only the twelve Tribes, but the *Ishmaelites*, the *Edomites*, and all the Posterity of *Keturah*, descended from his Loins.

† *Sarai* signifies *my Princess*, or Princess of my Family only; but *Sarah*, the Name now given her, denotes a Princess indefinitely, and at large, according to the Prediction concerning her, a Mother (or Princess) of many Nations shall she be, and Kings of People shall come of her, Gen. xvii. 16.

† *Isaac*, or according to the Hebrew, *Ischack*, signifies *he or she has, or shall laugh*; and this Name *Sarah* gave him, because, when the Angel promis'd that she shou'd become a Mother, tho' she was not of an Age to have Children, she privately laugh'd at the Prediction, and when the Child was born, she said, *God bath made me to laugh, so that all that hear will laugh with me*, Gen. xxi. 6. *Calmer's Dictionary*.



A. M.  
2107, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1897, &c.  
*Is visited by  
the Angels.*

Family; an Ordinance, which the *Hebrews*, have ever since observed very religiously.

ABRAHAM continu'd still to dwell at *Mamre*; and, as he was sitting, one Day, at the Door of his Tent, he espied three Persons, whom he took to be Travellers, coming towards him. He therefore went out to meet them; and having, in a very civil and respectful Manner, invited them to take a small Refreshment with him, (which they consented to) he immediately gave Orders for an Entertainment to be made ready, † which accordingly was serv'd in, and himself waited at the Table, under the Covert of a shady Oak.

WHILE they sat at Table, † one of the Guests, enquiring after *Sarah*, and being told, that she was in the Tent, he then address'd himself to *Abraham*, and assur'd him, that he had still in Remembrance the Case of his Wife *Sarah*, who, at the End of the Year, shou'd certainly have a Son. *Sarah*, who was listening at the

Tent-door, and thought herself far enough past Child-bearing, † could not refrain from laughing within herself; and when the Stranger ask'd the Reason of it, with such a serious Air, as struck her with Terror, and she endeavour'd to deny it, he dismiss'd her with this gentle Reproof—That it was highly wrong in her to mistrust what he had said unto her, since *nothing was impossible with God*.

UPON this, the Conversation ceased, and the three heavenly Guests rising up to proceed on their Journey, *Abraham* very courteously attended them some Part of the Way. Their Way lay towards *Sodom*, whither two of the Guests advanc'd with more Haste, but the third, continuing with *Abraham*, began to reveal a most dreadful Secret, *viz.* That the Iniquity of *Sodom*, and the other neighbouring Cities, was come to such a prodigious Height, that he was now going down, with an Intent to destroy them, \* if, upon Enquiry, he found their Abominations equal to the Report of them.

From Gen.  
xii—xxv. 11.

The Wickedness  
of Sodom and  
Gomorrhah.

† The Scripture informs us, Gen. xviii. 8. *that Abraham took Butter and Milk, and the Calf, (i. e. the choicest Parts of the Calf) and set it before them, and they did eat: Where the Eating of these Angels must be understood, according to the Nature of the Bodies, we may suppose them to have assum'd. If their Bodies were aerial, their Eating must have been in Appearance only; if substantial, their Eating might have been real, i. e. they might have receiv'd the Meat into their Bodies, which, afterwards, by a divine Power, was consum'd there. Pool's Annot. and Le Clerc's Commentary.*

† It is very observable, that one of these Angels (as the Apostle to the *Hebrews* calls them, Ch. xiii. 2.) appear'd more honourable, and superior to the other two, and therefore *Abraham* makes his Address to him as the Chief, and the Historian styles him *Jehovah*, which the Generality both of *Jews* and *Christians* do look upon, as the incommunicable Name of God; and therefore it is believ'd by the far greatest Part of the latter, that it was the Son of God, who appear'd in that Form. There are others however (particularly some modern ones) who maintain, that it was no more than an Angel, who spoke to him in the Person of God; tho' it hardly seems probable, either that *Moses* should call an Angel by that Name, or that *Abraham* should intercede with him, as he does, when he saith, *That be far from thee to destroy the Good with the Wicked, shall not the Judge of all the Earth do right?* Or that an Angel should peremptorily say, *If I find forty righteous Men in the Place, for their Sakes I will not destroy it.* So that the most probable Opinion is, that it was *Christ* himself, who is emphatically called the Judge of all the Earth. Universal History. The *Jews* however have a Maxim, that no Angel performs two Ministeries, or is sent upon two Messages at once; and therefore they think, that these three Angels (as they suppose them) were dispatch'd for different Purposes; one of them who was the Chief, to bring a Confirmation of the Birth of *Isaac*; another, to conduct *Lot* safe out of *Sodom*; and the third, to overthrow the Cities of the Plain: And therefore when one of them had deliver'd his Message to *Abraham*, there were but two, that held on their Course to *Sodom*. *Patrick's Commentary.*

† In the preceding Chapter (Ver. 17.) we read that *Abraham* laughed upon the same Occasion, and yet was not reprov'd; but the Difference of their Conduct might be this,——That *Abraham* laughed for Joy upon hearing the glad Tidings of a Son, but *Sarah's* Laughter proceeded from a Spirit of Distrust and Infidelity. *Pool's Annotations.*

\* Here is a wonderful Instance of God's Patience and Goodness, who, tho' he knew all without Enquiry, yet would not condemn even the most flagitious, without good Examination and Tryal. Before the Flood, God proceeded against the old World upon ocular Evidence; God saw that the Wickedness of Man was great, Gen. vi. 5, 12. At the Building of *Babel*, it is said, that the Lord came down to see the City and the Tower, which the Children of Men had built, Gen. xi. 5. And now again, before the Destruction of *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*, tho' the Cry against them was great, because of the Grievousness of their Sin, yet the Lord would not proceed against them upon common Fame; But I will go down, saith he, and see, whether they have done according to the Cry of it; and if not, I will know, Ch. xviii. 21.



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them. This Condescension of God, in communicating his Design to *Abraham*, gave him Encouragement to make Intercession for the wicked Inhabitants of these Cities, which, in six *petitionary* Propositions, he manag'd so well, as, by a gradual Decrease of the Number every Time, to bring him at last to a Concession, that if *even ten* just Persons were found in *Sodom* he would not destroy it: And with this conditional Promise he left *Abraham*.

IN the mean Time, the two other Guests, (who (as we said) went before, and were indeed the *ministring Angels*, whom God had appointed to execute his Judgments upon the *Sodomites*) held on their Course towards the City, where they arriv'd in the Evening, when *Lot* was sitting in the Gate. As soon as he saw them, he rose up to meet them, and, after proper Salutations, † invited them to his House to refresh and repose themselves that Night; which, at first, they declin'd, but afterwards, with some Importunity, comply'd with. But before it was Time to go to Rest, the Inhabitants of the City, both

young and old, being inform'd that *Lot* had Strangers with him, and, in all Probability, tempted with the beautiful Forms which the Angels had assum'd, encompass'd the House, and demanded of him to deliver them up, † that they might abuse them.

*Lot* thinking, by mild and soft Words, to appease his outrageous Neighbours, steps out of the Door, and, shutting it after him, intreats them to offer no Affront to his Guests; nay, rather than have the Laws of *Hospitality* violated, he offers to give up his two Virgin-Daughters to their Discretion. But all would not do; they threaten to use him worse than his Guests, a *pragmatical Stranger that pretended to controul them in any Thing!* and were pressing forward to break open the Door; when the two Angels, with more than human Strength, forced their Way out, took in their Host again, and, then shutting the Door, † struck all that were round it with Blindness, so that they were not able to find any more where it was.

From Gen.  
xii—xxv. 11.

## WHILST

And hereupon we may observe, that the *appearing* of Gods, in the Manner of Strangers, to punish or reward Men, was a common Tradition among the *Heathens*.

Καὶ τε Θεοὶ ξείνοισιν εὐκότες ἀλλοδαποῖσι  
Πωνήουσιν τελέθοντες, ἐπιστρωφῶσι πολλῶς,  
Ἀνθρώπων ὕβριν τε καὶ ἔυνομίην ἐφορῶντες.

HOM. Odyss. B.

† In the *Eastern* Countries of late indeed some few *Caravansaries* have been set up, but in the Time, we are now speaking of, there was no such Thing, as *Inns*, for the Accommodation of Strangers; and therefore all Travellers, when they came to a Town, if they were not entertain'd in a *private* House, were forc'd to abide all Night in the *Streets*. It was therefore a customary Thing for those of the better Sort to receive such *Way-faring* Men (whether they knew them, or knew them not) into their Houses, and there entertain them with great Civility. And this is the Reason, why both in *sacred* and *profane* Authors, we meet with such large Commendations of this Act of *Hospitality*, and particularly, in the Epistle to the *Hebrews* (Ch. xiii. 2.) have a Precept to this Effect, alluding to the very historical Passage now before us, *Be not forgetful to entertain Strangers, for thereby some have entertained Angels unawares.* *Le Clerc's* Commentary. Thus we read in *Homer*, that *Minerva*, coming in the Shape of *Mentor*, to make *Telemachus* a Visit

Ἔτι δ' ἰθάκης ἐνὶ θυμῷ ἐπὶ προθύροις Οδυσσεύς  
until he saw her, and thereupon went to her, and very kindly invited her in

εἶσι δ' Ἀθήνην  
βῆ δ' ἰὺς προθύροιο, νεμεσίου δ' ἐνὶ θυμῷ  
Ξεῖνον Διὸς ὄψην ἐφάμεν ἐγγύθι δὲ σῶς  
χεῖρ' ἔλε δ' ἐξίτερην, — &c. Odyss. A.

† That is, in an unnatural and preposterous Manner, which was afterwards expressly forbidden in the Law, *Levit.* xviii. 22. and thereby made capital, Ch. xx. 13. which vile Sin continu'd among the *Gentiles*, even in the *Apostle's* Time (as may be gather'd from *Rom.* i. 27. and *1 Cor.* vi. 9.) and was so generally practis'd among the People of *Sodom*, that from thence it took the Name of *Sodomy*, and the Practisers of it are call'd *Sodomites*, both in the Holy Scriptures, and our *English* Laws, which (as did the Law of God of old) do still make the Punishment of it to be Death. *Howell's* History.

† It is a probable Opinion, that these Men were struck, not with *actual* Blindness, but with a *Dizziness*, which disturb'd their Sight, and represented Objects falsely and in Confusion, in the same Manner, as the *Syrians* were, when sent to take *Elisha*, *2 Kings* vi. 18. And this was no hard Matter for the Angels to do, by making a small Alteration, either in their Sight, or in the Air, whereby either the *Door* might appear to them like the *solid* Wall, or the several Parts of the *Wall* like so many *Doors*. *Pool's* Annotations, and *Le Clerc's* Commentary.



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2107, &c.  
Ant. Chris.  
1897, &c.

WHILST they were thus groping about in vain, the two Angels acquainted Lot with their Commission; that their Errand was to execute the divine Vengeance upon that execrable Place; and therefore they advis'd him, if he had any Friends for whose Safety he was concern'd, that he wou'd immediately let them know their Danger, and warn them to depart in Time. Lot had no Relations, but only † two Sons-in-law, to whom his Daughters were contracted; but these, when he went to them early in the Morning, desiring them to go along with him, and leave that accursed Place, took the old Man to be crazy, or beside himself, and made a Banter and Ridicule of all that he said.

IN the Morning, as soon as it was Day, one of the Angels, observing Lot to linger (possibly to pack up some of his most valuable Goods) took him, his Wife and his two Daughters by the Hand, and carried them in a Manner forcibly, out of the City, bidding them to flee for their Lives; and, lest they shou'd be involv'd in the common Ruin, to make the best of their Way to the Mountains. Lot looking before him, and perceiving the Mountains to be at a good Distance, began to fear that he shou'd not be able to reach them in Time; and therefore intreated the Angel, that he might be permitted to escape to a small City, not far from Sodom, then called *Bela*, but afterwards *Zoar*, which he accordingly granted, and for his Sake spared the City; but

then he urg'd them to be expeditious, and to make all possible Haste thither, because they cou'd not begin to execute their Commission, until he was safely arriv'd. From Gen. xii—xxv. 11.

WHAT the Angels enjoin'd them, at their Departure, was neither to tarry in the *Plain*, nor to look behind them. But, before they got to *Zoar*, so it was, that Lot's Wife, either out of Forgetfulness of the Prohibition, or out of Love to the Place of her Habitation, looking back, was turn'd into a Pillar of \* *metallick* Salt, a lasting Monument of God's Vengeance on obstinate and unbelieving Offenders: And no sooner were the rest arriv'd at *Zoar*, but the angry Heavens began to pour down Showers of *liquid* Fire upon *Sodom and Gomorrah*, and the other wicked *Cities of the Plain*, which, within a short Time, so totally consumed them, that, when *Abraham*, the next Morning, looked towards the Country, he saw it all in a Smoak, like the Smoak of a large Furnace. The Fate of Lot's Wife.

THE Judgment indeed was so very terrible, that Lot, not thinking himself safe at *Zoar*, withdrew to the Mountains, to which he was first directed, and, for want of Houses, liv'd there, with his two Daughters in a Cave. His Daughters had lost their espoused Husbands in *Sodom*, and, now despairing of having any other, they plotted together to deceive their Father, and have Issue by him. The Elder was the Forwarder of this wicked Contrivance; and therefore representing

E c c c

to

Lot's Incest  
with his two  
Daughters.

† Several Translators, as well as some *Rabbins*, suppose, that these were the Husbands of some other of Lot's Daughters, who were actually married, and had left their Father's House; which seems to be confirm'd by the Angels ordering him to take his Wife, and his two Daughters, that were there present: But the original Words, which in our Version are render'd, *his Sons-in-law, which married his Daughters*, may be translated, according to the Interpretation of *Onkelos*, *his Sons-in-law, which were to marry*, &c. the Contract having been passed, but the Marriage not consummated by Co-habitation. Universal History, l. 1. c. 4.

\* It is not agreed by *Commentators*, what was the Crime, for which Lot's Wife was so severely punish'd. Some are of Opinion, that she deserv'd it, merely for disobeying the Commandment of the Angel, and expressing too much Concern for a People, that deserv'd no Compassion. Others say, that, being anxiously solicitous for her Daughters that were married there, and turning about to see, whether they follow'd her, she saw the divine *Shechinah*, or Majestick Appearance of God, descending to destroy the Place, which was the Occasion of her *Metamorphosis*. Others suppose, that, being in Confederacy with the *Sodomites*, she told them that her Husband was *distracted*, and gave them Notice, when any Strangers came to lodge with him, by a Sign of Smoak by Day, and of Fire by Night; whilst others again imagine, that the Scripture does not represent the Fate, which she met with, as a Punishment for any Crime, but as a Thing merely accidental. Universal History, l. 1. c. 4. There is one Circumstance however in the Text, viz. that she looked from behind her Husband, whom she follow'd, which seems to be mention'd, as the Reason of this her Presumption, because she could do it without her Husband's Observation or Reproof; to which she seems to have had a greater Regard, than to the all-seeing Eye of God. Pool's Annotations.



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to her Sister the Condition they were in, she proposed the Expedient of making her Father drunk with Wine; and, accordingly, one Evening they put their Project in Execution. For, having intoxicated the old Man, they put him to bed, and the Elder, lying with him without his Privy, obtain'd her End. The next Night they employ'd the same Artifice, and the Younger had her Turn: So that, in the Event, they had each of them a Son from this incestuous Commerce, \* whereof the Elder's was called *Moab*, and the Younger's *Ammon*, from whom the *Moabites*, and *Ammonites* (both bitter Enemies, in after Times, to *Israel*) were descended. But to return to *Abraham*.

A. M.  
2108, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1896, &c.  
Abraham's  
Intercourse  
with Abimelech.

AFTER the Destruction of *Sodom* and *Gomorrab*, he removed from *Mamre*, (probably to avoid the Stench of the Vale of *Siddim*) and came, and dwelt not far from † *Gerar*, a City of the *Philistines*, at a Place nam'd afterwards *Beerseba*, between *Cadesb* and *Shur*, where the same Adventure happened to him, which he had

met with in *Egypt*. The King of *Gerar*, supposing *Sarah* to be no more than *Abraham's* Sister (for here likewise she pass'd under that Character) † notwithstanding her advanc'd Age, saw Charms enough in her, to invite her unto his Bed; but God appeared to him in a Dream, and threaten'd him with immediate Death, if he did not return her untouch'd to her Husband. Whereupon *Abimelech* (for that was the common Name, in those Days, of all the Kings of *Palestine*) calls for *Abraham*, and expostulates the Matter with him; who, in Excuse for the Fiction, alledg'd his Fears, lest the Beauty of his Wife shou'd have endanger'd his Life: Tho' it was not altogether a Fiction (*as he said*) because she was so near a Relation to him (especially by his Father's Side) as might properly enough be called a Sister. This Apology pacify'd the King; so that he not only restored him his Wife, but giving her † a thousand Peices of Silver, desir'd her ‖ to buy a Veil with the Money, which might not only be a Covering to her

From Gen.  
xx—xxv. 11.

Face,

\* *Moab* settled himself in the Parts adjoining *Eastward* to the *Salt-sea*, or *Lacus Asphaltites*, and in the neighbouring Tract, on the River *Jordan Eastward*: For we plainly learn, that great Part of the Kingdom of *Sihon*, King of the *Amorites*, did formerly belong to the *Moabites*, Numb. xxi. 21. *Ammon* seated himself in the Parts adjoining to *Moab*: For it is evident from Scripture, that the *Ammonites* were formerly possess'd of the Parts on the *East* of *Jordan* about the River *Jabbok*, or of the Northern Part of that, which was afterwards the Kingdom of *Sihon*. Vid. Numb. xxi. 13. Josh. xiii. 25. and Judg. xi. 13, 23. But these Things we shall have Occasion to illustrate more fully, when we come to describe the Course of the Travels of the *Israelites* out of *Egypt*, into the Land of *Canaan*. *Wells's* Geography of the Old Testament, Vol. I.

† *Gerar* was a regal City, situate not far from the Angle, where the *South* and *West* Sides of *Palestine* meet; and the Country, to which it gave the Name, extended itself pretty far into *Arabia Petraea*. *Beerseba* signifies the *Well of the Oath*, because here *Abraham* made a Covenant with *Abimelech* King of *Gerar*, concerning a Well, which he had digg'd hard by. Here he likewise planted a Grove, and instituted an *Oratory*, or Place of divine Worship; and, in Process of Time, here was a City, or considerable Town built, which is taken Notice of by *heathen* Authors under the Name of *Berzaima*, or *Bersabe*. *Cadesb* was a City, lying on the Edge of the Land of *Canaan*, to the *South* of *Hebron*; *Shur* was the Name of that Part of *Arabia Petraea*, which joins *Egypt*, and the *Red-sea*; and somewhere between these two, was that *Well*, near to which *Abraham*, when he left *Mamre*, fixt his Habitation. *Wells's* Geog. of the Old Test. Vol. I.

† *SARAH* was now ninety Years old, when *Abimelech* took her into his Family; whence it may seem very strange, that a Woman of her Age should look so very well, as to be desired by a King, who, in those Days, might have commanded the most youthful Beauties in his whole Dominions. But, according to some Interpreters, People of *ninety* then were as fresh and vigorous as those of *forty now*; and *Sarah* might, even in that respect, excel her Co-evals, by Reason of her *Sterility*, which is a great Preserver of Beauty: Tho' others are of Opinion, that God, having taken away her Sterility, her Beauty returned with her Fruitfulness; for, by this Time, it is computed, that she had conceived her Son. *Hoseell's* Hist. l. 1.

† The original Word does not so properly mean *Pieces*, as *Weight*, because Money was then paid by Weight; and may therefore be interpreted a thousand Shekels of Silver, i. e. about 57 Pounds in the Value of our present Money. *Bedford's* Script. Chronol. l. 3. c. 4.

‖ The Words in the Text, according to our Translation, are these, — And unto Sarah he said, behold I have given to thy Brother a thousand Pieces of Silver; behold he is to thee a Covering of the Eyes unto all, that are with thee, and to all others; thus she was reproved. Where we must observe, in the first Place, that the Word, which we render *reprove*, does more properly signify to *instruct*, which must certainly be the right Sense of the Word here, considering

that



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Face, and in every Country an Indication likewise of her being a married Woman, because he held it inconvenient for her any more to pass for her Husband's Sister. On her Husband he bestow'd in like manner Plenty of other Kind of Wealth, and made him a free Offer to live where he pleas'd, in his Dominions; which generous Treatment engag'd *Abraham* to interceed with God, † to remove the *Disability*, which he had inflicted on the King, in order to restrain him from *Sarah*; and to restore the Queen, and the other Women of the Nation, to their wanted *Fertility*, which for some Time seems to have been obstructed.

The Birth of  
Isaac, and  
Expulsion of  
Ishmael.

A YEAR was now pass'd, and the Time appointed come, when *Sarah* brought forth a Son, whom *Abraham*, according to the divine Direction, call'd *Isaac*, and circumcis'd him the eighth Day. They were now in the *Zenith* of their Happiness. *Sarah* suckled the Child herself, and \* weaned him at the usual Time; and *Abraham*, upon this joyful Occasion, made a great Feast: But, in the midst of their Festivity, *Sarah* perceiving that *Ishmael* treated her Son with Contempt and Derision, was so enrag'd against him, that

she never ceas'd importuning her Husband, to turn both Mother and Son out of Doors. *Abraham* had the Tenderness of a Father to his Child. He loved *Ishmael*, and was loth to part with him: And therefore apply'd himself to God, in this arduous Juncture, for Direction. But God confirming what *Sarah* had requested, and promising moreover to make of *Ishmael* (because he was his Son) a populous Nation, tho' his Portion and Inheritance was not to be in that Land, which was all along design'd for the Descendants of *Isaac*, he was at last prevail'd on to send him and his Mother away.

From Gen.  
xx—xxv. 11.

CALLING *Hagar* therefore, one Morning, to him, he order'd her to take her Son, some Water, and other Provisions with her; to go into the neighbouring Wilderness, and to tarry by the Side of a certain Fountain, she wou'd meet with there, until she shou'd hear farther from him. She did as she was ordered: but, mistaking their Way, and missing of the Fountain, they had quite exhausted the little Water they had, and her Son being in an high Fever, and ready to die with Thirst, to shade him a little from the scorching Heat, she placed him under a Tree, whilst

that *Abimelech* had already accepted of *Abraham's* Apology, and was so far from irritating either him, or *Sarah* by Reproaches, that, on the contrary, he was endeavouring to win their Friendship with very considerable Presents. But then, as to the Covering of *Sarah's* Eyes, this may be variously expounded, according as the Words refer, either to *Abraham*, or to the Pieces of Silver. If they refer to *Abraham*, then the Meaning of the King's Words will be, *Thou needest no other Defence of thy Chastity, than he; nor hast thou any Reason hereafter to say, he is thy Brother; for so dear is he to God, that God will defend him, and he will defend thee; and not only him, but all that are with thee, and that even among Strangers, without any such Shifts and Equivocations, as you have hitherto thought fit to make use of.* But if the Words refer to the Present of a thousand Pieces, then the Sense must be, *I have given him that Sum of Money to buy thee a Veil, that all, who converse with thee, here, or in any other Country, where thou shalt come, may know thee to be a married Woman.* This Sense indeed is countenanc'd by the LXX: But others have thought, that it might better be render'd thus, — *This Money, which I have paid thy Husband, as a Mulet, for my having endeavour'd to take thee from him, will be a Means to deter all others from having any Concern with thee, when once they shall hear, how much I have suffered upon that Account.* The Reader is left to his own Option; but we should rather think, that the last of these Interpretations is preferable. *Patrick's* and *Le Clerc's* Commentaries.

† The Text tells us, that *God had fast closed up all the Wombs* of the House of *Abimelech*, which Phrase, in Scripture, does frequently denote *Barrenness*; but that it cannot do so here, is pretty plain from hence — That the History of this Transaction is of too short a Continuance, to give Space for a Discovery of this Kind, viz. whether the Women, by God's Infliction, were become actually barren or no: And therefore the other Opinion is more probable, viz. that it was such an Indisposition, or Sore, or Swelling in the secret Parts, that the Men could neither enjoy their Wives, nor the Women, who were with Child, could be delivered. *Pool's* Annotations, and *Patrick's* Commentaries.

\* It is not easy to guess, how long it was, that Women gave suck in those Days, because the ancient *Hebrews* are divided about it: Some affirming that *Isaac* was weaned, when he was two, some five, and others, not till he was twelve Years old. If however we will judge by what the young *Maccabee's* Mother said to him, *My Son, remember I have suckled thee three Years*, 2 *Maccab.* vii. 27. that Time will appear the most probable. For there is no Reason to believe, that *Isaac* was weaned before the usual Term, for Want of Care, or Affection in his Mother. *Patrick's* Commentaries, and *Univ. Hist.* l. i. c. 7.



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whilst herself, despairing to find any Succour in the Place, and not bearing to see him expire before her Eyes, withdrew a little, and began to bemoan her hard Fate, while, with earnest Cries and Tears, the Child was imploring the divine Help and Commiseration. The divine Help was not long a coming : For suddenly an Angel from Heaven bids the weeping Mother dry up her Tears, and fear not ; tells her, that God had heard the Child's Prayer, and would make of him a great Nation ; and, for their present Relief, points her to a Well of Water, which she had not perceived before ; and directs her how to cure her Son. Refresh'd with this Water, and supported with other Things, which *Abraham*, (very probably) from time to time, might send them ; instead of going into *Egypt*, as they first intended, they here took up their Abode in the Wilderness of *Paran*, where *Ismael*, in a short Time, growing a very expert *Archer*, was able to get Provisions both for himself, and his Mother ; and when he grew up unto Man's Estate, his Mother, who was herself an *Egyptian*, married him to a Woman of her own Country, \* by whom he had twelve Sons, who dwelt from *Havilah* unto *Shur*, i. e. in several Parts of *Arabia Petraea*, whereof the *Western* Part, towards *Egypt*, is, in Scripture, call'd *Shur*, and the *Eastern* Part, towards the *Persian Gulph*, *Havilah*.

*ABRAHAM*, in the mean Time, having accepted of *Abimelech's* Offer, continu'd to live in the Land of *Palestine*, and, as his Riches and Power every Day increas'd, *Abimelech* fearing, lest, at some Time or other, he might attempt Something in Prejudice of him, or his Successors in the Government, came, with the *General* of his Forces, whose Name was *Phicol*, and made a solemn League of Friendship with him. Some † little Difference had arisen between *Abimelech's* Servants and *Abraham's*, about a Well, which *Abraham's* Servants had digg'd. But, after a little Expostulation, they quickly came to a good Understanding. The Well was restor'd to *Abraham*, and the Place, where they enter'd into this solemn Covenant, was thenceforth call'd *Beer-sheba*. Here *Abraham*, intending to end his Days, unless God shou'd otherwise dispose of him, planted a Grove for a Place of religious Worship, and built an Altar, and call'd on the Name of the Lord, the everlasting God ; who was minded || to make one Trial more of his Faith and Fidelity, and a severe Trial it was.

From Gen.  
xx—xxv. 11.  
Abraham's  
Covenant with  
Abimelech.

GOD had order'd him to send away *Ismael*, and given him Assurance, that the Blessings, promis'd to his Posterity, were not to take Place in any Part of that Branch of his Family, but that *Isaac* shou'd be the Son of the Promise, and his Descendants, Heirs of that Happiness and Prosperity,

Is order'd to  
Sacrifice his  
Son Isaac.

\* The Names of these Sons are, *Nehajoth*, *Kedar*, *Adbeel*, *Mihsam*, *Mishma*, *Dumab*, *Massa*, *Hadar*, *Tema*, *Jethur*, *Naphish*, and *Kedemab*, twelve Princes according to their Nations, Gen. xxv. 13, &c. and as their Descendants were, from their Father, denominated by the common Name of *Ismaelites* ; so, from *Hagar*, the Mother of *Ismael*, they are also called *Hagarens*, or *Hagarites*, under which Name we find some Footsteps of them in *Heathen* Authors ; but certain it is, that the *Arabians* do, to this very day, value themselves upon their being descended from *Ismael*. *Well's Geogr. of the Old Test. Vol. I.*

† It will not seem strange, that *Abraham* should look upon the losing of a Well as a Matter of such Consequence, considering how ill furnished these *Eastern* Countries were with Water ; and 'twas highly prudent of him to complain of Grievances now, before he enter'd into Covenant with *Abimelech*, that, they being once redress'd, there might remain no Occasion of Quarrels afterwards. *Bibliotheca Bib. Vol. I.*

|| The Words in the Text are, *that God did tempt Abraham*, but God is said to tempt no Man ; and therefore all that he could be supposed to do in this Case, was only to make Trial of him ; and that too, not to inform himself of the Sincerity and Steadiness of his Faith, but in order to the holy Patriarch's own Justification, and to make him an illustrious Pattern of an entire Dependance on the Almighty, to future Saints, and Confessors. The Jews reckon up ten Trials of *Abraham*, of which the last was the greatest. 1. God's Command to him to leave his Country. 2. The Famine, which forced him to go into *Egypt*. 3. *Pharaoh's* taking his Wife from him. 4. His War with the four Kings. 5. His Despair of having *Isaac* by *Sarah*, and marrying *Hagar* on that Account. 6. His Circumcision in his old Age. 7. His Wife's being again taken from him by *Abimelech*. 8. The Expulsion of *Hagar*, when she was with Child by him. 9. His Expulsion of her, and *Ismael*. And, 10. His Oblation of his only Son *Isaac*. *Bibliotheca Bib. Vol. I.*



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prosperity, which he had made over to him ; and now he was pleas'd to require him, with his own Hands, to destroy this *his Son, his only Son Isaac*. A cruel Injunction ! But *Abraham*, we see, never stay'd to expostulate about the Severity, or Unlawfulness of it, but, on the very next Morning, without saying a Word to any of his Family, gets all Things ready, and, leaving it to God to make good his own Promises, resolves to obey. To that Purpose, taking his Son *Isaac* with him, and some Servants, with Provisions, and Instruments, proper for the Sacrifice, he sets out ; and, \* in three Days Time, came within sight of † Mount *Moriab*, the Place which God had appointed for that dreadful Scene. Here, leaving his Servants behind, that they might not disturb him with their Intercessions or Lamentations, he goes up to the Mount, without betraying any Sign of Grief or Concern, that might raise a Suspicion in his Son. His Son, on the other Hand, laden with the Wood, and the other Materials for a Burnt-offering, but

perceiving nothing proper for a Victim, <sup>From Gen. xx—xxv. 11.</sup> cou'd not forbear asking his Father, *Where it was ?* Such a Question, at such a Time, was enough to have stagger'd any Heart less firm than *Abraham's*, who only answer'd calmly, *That God wou'd provide himself with one*, little thinking how prophetically he spake : For he had no sooner bound his Son upon the Wood, and stretch'd out his Hand to give the fatal Blow, || but God was pleas'd to stop him short || by a Voice from Heaven, forbidding him to do it, and declaring a Satisfaction in this last Test of his Obedience. Surpriz'd at the Voice, *Abraham* turns about to see whence it came, and spies a Ram, caught by the Horns in a thick Bush, which he immediately took and offer'd up for a Burnt-offering instead of his Son ; and, in Memory of the whole Transaction, called the Place, where it was done, *Jehovah-jireh*, in Allusion to the Answer, which he gave to his Son's Question, *God will provide himself a Lamb*.

THUS

\* The better to explain, how *Abraham* came to know the Place, which God had appointed, the *Jews* have a Tradition, that when God bad him go thither, and offer his Son, he asked how he should know it ? To which the Answer was, That wheresoever he should see the *Glory of the Lord*, that should be the Place ; and that, accordingly, when he came within Sight of Mount *Moriab*, he beheld a Pillar of Fire, reaching from the Earth to the Heavens, whereby he knew that *that* was the Place. *Hottingeri Historia Orient.* p. 36.

† This Mountain, whereon *Abraham* was ordered to offer his Son *Isaac*, was certainly the same, on which the Temple was afterwards built by *Solomon*, and on Part of which, viz. Mount *Calvary*, *Christ* did afterwards actually offer himself unto God for the Redemption of Mankind : Which Offering of his, as it seems to have been designedly prefigured by the intentional Offering of *Isaac* ; so it might seem good to divine Reason to assign the same, for the typical Offering of *Isaac*, where, in due Time, the *Antitype*, our Redeemer, was to be offered. But, instead of *Moriab*, the *Samaritans* read *Moreb*, and pretend that God sent *Abraham* towards *Sechem*, where certainly was *Moreb*, [Gen. xii. 6. and Deut. xi. 30.] and that it was upon Mount *Gerizim*, that *Isaac* was brought, in order to be sacrificed. But this, in all Probability, is no more than a Contrivance to enhance the Glory of their Temple. *Wells's Geogr.* and *Calmet's History*.

|| The Words of God are, *Lay not thy Hand on the Child, neither do any thing unto him*, Gen. xxii. 12. and yet in *Heb.* xi. 17. we are told, that *Abraham* offer'd up *Isaac*, when he was tried. But this is easily reconcil'd, if we do but remember, that God always takes that for done, (whether in the Commission of Sin, or Performance of Duty) where there is a Will and Intention to do it, supposing the Person to have an Opportunity. *Street's Dividing the Hoof*.

|| The Words, in the Beginning of the Chapter, are, that God tempted *Abraham*, bidding him to go and sacrifice his Son : But in Ver. 11. it is said, that the *Angel of the Lord* forbade him to do it : From whence some may infer, that *Abraham* obey'd the Angel, who bad him spare his Son, against the Command of God, who bad him slay him. But, to solve this Difficulty (if it be thought any) we must observe, that, whenever the Holy Scriptures tell us, that God said any thing, or that an Angel spake, we are always to understand both of them to have been present ; for the Angels ever attend upon the *Divine Majesty*, and, being his Ministers, do nothing but by his Order : So that when he is said to speak, it is, *by them* ; and when they are said to speak, it is *from him*. It is the Lord therefore that speaks, whosoever be the Minister. *Patrick's Comment*. And the Speech, which God makes to *Abraham*, upon this weighty Occasion, the *Jewish Historian* comments upon in this Manner, “ Hold thy Hand, and spare thy Son ; for I did not require it of thee, out of any Delight, I take in human Blood, or that I would make a Father the *Affliction* of the very Child, which I myself have given him ; but to see how far thou wou'dst submit to thy God, in a Self denial to thine own Inclination and Nature. But now, since I find thy Piety to be Proof against all Temptations, I do here confirm over-again to thee all my former Promises, &c. *Joseph. Antiq.* l. i. c. 14.

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Ant. Christ.  
1896, &c.

THUS having perform'd an Act of such perfect and heroick Obedience, as engag'd God to renew his Promise, with great Amplifications, and to confirm it to him with an *Oath*, he went, and rejoin'd his Servants; and, returning to *Beer-sheba*, was no sooner arriv'd, but he was welcom'd with the joyful News of the Increase of his Family, viz. that *Milcab*, his Brother *Nabor's* Wife, \* had born him a numerous Issue, which † determin'd him, at a proper Time, to send thither for a Wife for his Son *Isaac*: But \* before he did that, it happen'd that his own Wife *Sarah* died, in the 127th Year of her Age, at *Kirjatharba*, afterwards called *Hebron*, in the Country of *Canaan*.

*Sarah's Death and Burial.*

† *ABRAHAM* was then probably

at *Beer-sheba*, but, being inform'd of her Death, he came to *Hebron*, there to mourn and perform his last Offices for her; but what he wanted was a convenient Burying-Place. He therefore address'd himself to the People, assembled in a Body † at the *Gate of the City*, intreating them to allow him the Liberty of burying his Wife among them; but, as he was a Stranger in the Country, and had no Land then of his own, he cou'd pretend to no Right of giving honourable Interment to his Dead, in the Sepulchres of the Country, without the Consent of the Proprietors. He therefore desir'd *Ephron*, one of the principal Inhabitants, † to sell him the Field, called *Machpelah* †, with the Cave and Sepulchre belonging to it. The Purchase

From Gen.  
xx—xxv. 11.

\* The Children of *Nabor*, by *Milcab*, were *Huz*, *Buz*, *Kemuel*, *Chezad*, *Huzi*, *Pildash*, *Jidlapb*, and *Bethuel*, who begat *Rebecca*, the Wife of *Isaac*; and by his Concubine, whose Name was *Reumah*, he had *Tebah*, *Gaham*, *Thabash*, and *Maacah*, from whom the City of *Maacah*, or *Abel-Beth-Maacah*, whose Territories are supposed to have been situate between the two *Lebanons*, might probably receive its Name, Gen. xxii. 20, &c.

† *Nabor* very probably either removed with his Father *Terah* (as *Abraham* did) from *Ur* in *Chaldea*, and settled at *Haran* in *Mesopotamia*, or, not long after, followed them thither; because, after that the Family left *Ur*, the first News, that we hear of him, is, that he was settled at *Haran*, and there had got a numerous Family; and 'tis upon the account of his Brother's residing there, as well as that himself had once lived there, that *Abraham* calls it his own Country, and the Place where his Kindred dwelt, Gen. xxiv. 4.

\* Some of the *Arabian* Writers tell us, that, when *Sarah* heard that *Abraham* had taken her only Son into the Mountain, to sacrifice to God, she fell into a very great Agony, which brought on a Fit of Sickness, whereof she died. *Eutychii Annales*, p. 74. *Josephus* indeed informs us, that she died soon after this Event; but if (as he says) *Isaac* was five and twenty Years old, when his Father would have sacrificed him, *Sarah* was ninety Years old when she bore him, and 125 when she died, she must (according to his own Calculation) have lived eleven or twelve Years after it, and this our learned *Usher* makes the Difference between his Sacrifice and her Death. *Calmet's Dictionary*.

† There is something of Obscurity in this Passage of the History. *Sarah* is said to have died at *Hebron*, and yet we have no Notice of *Abraham* removing from *Beer-sheba*, to that Place; so that, upon some Occasion or other, we must suppose them to have been parted, and that *Sarah* went to *Hebron*, while *Abraham* kept still in his own Habitation: For to say that *Abraham* came from his own Tent to that of his Wife's, to make Lamentation for her, is not consistent with the Sequel of the Text.

† The Gates of Cities, in these Days, and for many Ages after, were the Places of *Judicature*, and common Resort. Here the Governors and Elders of the City met to hear Complaints, administer Justice, make Conveyances of Titles and Estates, and, in short, to transact all the publick Affairs of the Place: And from hence is that Passage in the *Psalms*, *They shall not be ashamed, when they speak to their Enemies in the Gate*, Psalm cxxvii. Ver. ult. i. e. when they are accused by them before the Court of Magistrates. It is probable that the Room, or Hall, where these Magistrates sat, was over the Gate, because *Boaz* is said to go up to the Gate; and the Reason of having it built there, seems to have been for the Conveniency of the Inhabitants, who, being all Husbandmen, and forced to pass and repass every Morning and Evening, as they went, and came from their Labour, might be more easily call'd, as they went by, whenever they were wanted to appear in any Business. So that, from the whole it appears, that *Abraham* cou'd not have made his Purchase from *Ephron*, without his having Recourse to the City Gates. *Universal History* l. i. c. 7.

† It is an Observation of all those, who have written about the Sepulture of the Antients, that their *Dormitories*, or Burying-Places, were never in Cities, much less in Temples or Churches, but always in the Fields or Gardens. The Use of Grottos or Vaults is certainly very ancient. *Bibliotheca Bibl.* Vol. I.

† The Word in *Hebrew* signifies *double*, whence it is suppos'd by some, that there was one Cave within another, or two or more contiguous to each other, in one of which *Sarah* was buried, and afterwards *Abraham* in another. But those, who derive it from the *Arabick*, tell us, that, in that Language, it signifies *shot up*, or *walled up*, which, in *Eastern* Countries, was a common Way of making their Tombs, to prevent Thieves from harbouring in them, or to hinder them from being, in any Manner, violated or profan'd. And, if this be the right Derivation, then may the Cave of *Machpelah* be translated, *the Cave that was shot up*. *Calmet's Dictionary*.



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chafe was made before all the People of *Hebron*, at the Price of 400 Shekels of Silver, *i. e.* about sixty Pounds Sterling; and there he buried *Sarah*; after that he had mourn'd for her; † according to the Custom of the Country.

Isaac's Marriage with Rebecca.

By this Time *Abraham* was well advanced in Years; and, being desirous to see his Son *Isaac* marry'd, and settled in the World, before he died, he called *Eliezar*, the Steward of his Household, and, † having taken an Oath of him (in Case he died first) to procure his Son a Wife \* of his own Kindred, and not of the *Canaanites*, he sent him into *Mesopotamia*, with full Instructions and Authority to conclude the Marriage, and with a Train suitable to such an Embassy.

*ELIEZAR*, in coming to *Haran*, the Place where his Master's Relations dwelt, stopped at the publick Well, (whether it was customary for the young Women of the Place to come every Morning and Evening for Water) to rest, and refresh his Camels; and, being pensive and folli-

citous how to perform his Message to his Master's Satisfaction, he made a mental Prayer to God, that he would be pleas'd to give this Token of the Successfulness of his Journey, *viz.* That the Person, design'd for his young Master's Wife, might discover it by some Token of Courtesy to him. In the mean Time \* *Rebecca* came to the Well: And, when *Eliezar* desir'd her to give him a Draught of her Water, she offer'd her Service, not only to draw for him, but for his Camels likewise, which (being the very Sign he requested of God) he permitted her to do, for his fuller Conviction.

WHILE he saw her thus employ'd, he took Notice that the Damsel was exceeding beautiful; and, having enquir'd into her Relations and Family, he found that she was his Master's Brother's Granddaughter: Whereupon he immediately took out a Pair of *Gold Ear-rings*, to the Weight of two *Shekels*, and a Pair of *Bracelets*, which weigh'd about *ten*, with which he presented her, desiring, at the same

From Gen.  
xx—xxv. 11.

† What the *Rites of Mourning* for the Dead, in those Days, were, 'tis harder to determine, because we have, as yet, no Particulars of it recorded in Scripture. From the subsequent Practice however we may infer, that they shut themselves up from Company, neglected the Care of their Bodies, and abstained from their ordinary Food. They fasted, and lay upon the Ground; they wept, tore their Cloths, smote their Breasts, went bare-foot, and pull'd off their Hair and Beards. The Time of Mourning was usually for seven Days; but it was commonly lengthen'd or shorten'd, according to the State or Circumstances, wherein they found themselves: And, during this Period, they did not dress themselves, nor make their Beds, nor cover their Heads, nor shave themselves, nor cut their Nails, nor go into the Bath, nor salute any Body, nay, nor so much as read the Book of the Law, or say their usual Prayers. *Patrick's Commentary*, and *Calmet's Dictionary*, under the Word *Mourning*.

† The Form, in which *Eliezar* took his Oath, was, we are told, by putting his Hand under his Master's Thigh. This is the first Time we read of that Ceremony, which was afterwards us'd by *Jacob*, and *Joseph*, when they were a dying; and the Oddness of it has inclin'd some judicious Authors to think, that it implies a more solemn Mystery, than Men are aware of. Some suppose that it was swearing by the *Messias*, (who was to come out of *Abraham's* Loins or Thigh, (*Gen. xvi. 26.*) others, by the Covenant of *Circumcision*, the Part circumcised being near the Thigh: But the most probable Conjecture is,——That, as it could not well be done but in a kneeling Posture, so it was a Token of Subjection and Homage from a Servant to his Lord, he sitting, and his Servant putting his Hand under him; and thereby implicitly declaring, *I am under your Power, and ready to do whatever you shall think fit to command me.* The Custom however afterwards in Swearing was, to lift up the Hand to Heaven, (*Gen. xiv. 22.*) and upon account of both these Ceremonies, the Greek Word *ὅρκος*, which signifies an Oath, is suppos'd to be derived from the Hebrew *Jereck*, a Thigh; as the Word *ὀμνύω*, to swear, is suppos'd to come from the Hebrew *Jamin*, which is the Right Hand. *Ainsworth's Annotations*.

\* Not but that *Laban* and his Family were Idolaters, as well as the *Canaanites*, but then he was much better than they, because he still retain'd the Worship of the true God, as appears from the Sequel of the History, [*Ch. xxiv. 37.*] tho' blended and corrupted with very gross Mixtures and Additions of his own, whereas the *Canaanites* had utterly revolted from it. *Grot. Par.*

\* Great was the Simplicity and Humility of these early Days, when Persons of the best Rank, and of the female Sex too, did not disdain to be employ'd in such servile Offices. Thus, in the following Age, *Jacob* found his Cousin *Rachel* watering her Father's Sheep; and, several Ages after that, the seven Daughters of *Jethro*, who was a Prince, as well as a Priest of *Midian*, kept their Father's Flocks, and used to draw Water for the Cattle. So well has our Author express'd that Simplicity of Manners, which we may observe in *Homer*, or *Hesiod*, or any of the most ancient Writers. *Howell's History*. l. 1.



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same Time, that, if they had any Room at her House, he might be permitted to lodge there that Night. Her Answer was, that *that* he might do very conveniently; and so, accepting of the Presents, she made haste home to acquaint the Family with this Adventure, leaving *Eliezar* full of Contemplations, and Acknowledgments to the divine Favour for this happy, surprizingly happy Incident.

As soon as *Laban* had heard what his Sister had to tell him, he went immediately, and, inviting the Stranger into his House, order'd all proper Provision to be made for the civil Reception, both of himself and his Retinue. At his first Introduction, *Eliezar* opened to the Family the Occasion of his Coming; acquainted them with the Success, that had attended him in his Journey; and gave them a full Account of the Circumstances of his Master's Family; of the Wealth and Prosperity, wherewith God had blessed him; of the Son and Heir, which he had given him in his old Age; and of the large Expectances, which this his Heir had, not only from the Prerogative of his Birth, but from the Donation and Entail of all his Father's Possessions: And, having, in this Manner, deliver'd his *Credentials*, he demanded immediately, even before he did either eat or drink with them, their positive Answer.

† *LABAN* and *Bethuel* were both of Opinion, that the Divine Providence was very visible in this whole Affair; and therefore concluding, that it wou'd be

mighty wrong to refuse *Rebecca* upon this Occasion, they consented that he shou'd carry her to her intended Husband, as soon as he pleased: So that Matters being thus far agreed on, he thought it now proper to present her with the *Jewels* of Silver, and Gold, and fine Rayment, which he had brought for her; and he having, at the same Time, made some considerable Presents to her Mother, and Brethren, the Remainder of the Day they devoted to Feasting and Mirth. In the Morning, *Eliezar*, who began to think the Time long till his Master was acquainted with the good Success of his Negotiation, desir'd to be dismiss'd. The Request a little startled them. They promis'd themselves, that at least, he would stay ten Days longer: But, he persisting in his Resolution, the Thing was referr'd to *Rebecca*, who consented to go with him, as soon as he pleas'd: So that, all Things being presently made ready, and having \* the *Bridal* Blessing bestow'd upon her, she took her Leave and departed, with her Nurse (whose Name was *Deborah*) and other Servants appointed to attend her.

WHILST *Eliezar* was conveying his fair Charge to his Master's House, Providence had so order'd the Matter, that *Isaac*, taking a solitary Walk in the *Fields* that Evening, happen'd to espy his Servants and Camels upon the Road, and thereupon went forwards to meet them. As soon as *Rebecca* was inform'd who he was, she alighted, and \* throwing her Vail over her Face (as the Manner of Women then was)

From Gen.  
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† This *Bethuel* cou'd not be her Father, because, had he been so, it wou'd have been improper to have had *Laban*, either nam'd before him, or giving Answer to *Abraham's* Messenger, when his Father was by; and therefore, since *Josephus* makes the Damsel tell *Eliezar*, that her Father had been dead long ago, and that she was left to the Care of her Brother *Laban*, this *Bethuel*, who is here nam'd after *Laban*, and is never more taken Notice of during the whole Transaction, must have been some younger Brother of the Family. Universal History, l. i. c. 7.

\* The Blessing is compris'd in these Words, *Be thou a Mother of Thousands of Millions, and let thy Seed possess the Gate of those that hate them*; which was afterwards made a solemn Form of Benediction in leading the Bride to her Bridegroom.

\* The Use of the *Vail* was the universal Practice among all Nations, as far as History can inform us, except the *Spartans*, who are reported to have been singular, in that their Virgins were permitted to appear without a Vail, but, after they were married, they were never to be seen in publick without it. It was from this Practice of Vailing the Bride, when she was brought to the Bridegroom, in Token both of Modesty and Subjection, that the *Presents*, which he made her upon this Occasion, were, by the *Greeks* called *ἀνταλλάγματα*: And thus the Poets, in celebrating the Marriage of *Proserpine* to *Pluto*, have this Fiction——That upon unvailing his Bride, he presented her with the Island of *Sicily*, in Lieu of her Vail, which he took from her. *Bibliotheca Bibl.* Vol. I.



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was) she waited to receive his first Compliments. † *Isaac*, with great Respect, address'd himself to her, and conducted her into his Mother's Tent, which was fitted up for her Apartment. Not long after they were married together, and *Isaac* grew so fond of her, that the Love, he had for his Wife, help'd to alleviate the Grief, he had long conceived for the Loss of his Mother.

Abraham's  
Marriage  
with *Keturah*,  
and his Death.

AFTER this happy Marriage of his Son, *Abraham*, still finding himself strong enough to make a new Addition to his Family, took another Wife, † whose Name was *Keturah*, by whom he \* had six Sons: But, lest they should interfere with *Isaac* in his Inheritance of *Canaan*, as they grew up, he portion'd them off, and sent them

away towards the *East*, where, settling in *Arabia* and *Syria*, they became, in Time, Heads of different Nations; whereof we have Foot-steps both in *Sacred* and *Profane* History.

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THIS is the Substance of what the *Sacred* History relates concerning the great Patriarch *Abraham*. † At length, laden with Honours, and out-worn with Age, after he had lived the Space of an hundred and seventy five Years, he took leave of this World: and, by his two Sons, *Ismael* and *Isaac*, was buried in the Cave of *Machpelah*, (where, above forty Years before, he had repositied the Remains of his beloved Wife, *Sarah*) leaving a Name, famous to all Posterity, behind him.

† It may seem a little strange, that, upon so singular an Occasion, no mention should be made of *Abraham*, who was a principal Party concern'd herein; but for this some account by supposing, that *Abraham*, before this, had married *Keturah*, (tho', not to break in with the Account of his Son's Marriage, the History relates it later) and resign'd his Estate, and the Government of his Family into the Hands of *Isaac*, chusing to live the Remainder of his Days in Retirement with his new Consort.

† *Keturah* is suppos'd, by some *Jewish* Interpreters, to be the same with *Hagar*, whom *Abraham*, after his Wife's Death, sent for again, and by her had all the six Sons here mention'd: But, besides that *Hagar* must, by this Time, have been above 80 Years of Age, and, consequently, too old to bear so many Children, the Text itself seems to be against this Supposition; For it informs us, that *Abraham* added, or proceeded to take another Wife, which is a different Thing to his recalling the old one. The more probable Opinion therefore is, that this *Keturah* was a Domestick of his own, a *Canaanite* perhaps, whom he had converted to the true Religion; but then the Difficulty is, how *Abraham* cou'd dispose of so many Sons, in so short a Space, as that which interven'd between his Wife's, and his own Death. To solve this, some have suppos'd, that this *Keturah* became his Wife, i. e. Wife of the second Order, long before the Death of *Sarah*, even immediately after he parted with *Hagar*; but then this Supposition is contrary to the Sense of the *Original*; and therefore, if we are minded to adhere to that, we must say, that *Abraham*'s living almost forty Years after *Sarah*'s Death gave him Time enough to dispose of the Sons begotten of *Keturah*, as the Renovation of his Strength, which was certainly miraculous, (for forty Years before, he is said to have been dead to all such Purposes, *Rom. vi. 19.*) enabled him to beget them. *Calmer's Dictionary*, *Ainsworth's Annotations*, and *Universal History*, l. 1. c. 7.

\* His Sons were, *Zimram*, *Joksham*, *Medan*, *Midian*, *Isbak*, and *Shuab*, whereof *Jokshim* had *Sheba*, and *Dedan*: *Dedan* had *Asburim*, *Letushim*, and *Leumim*: And *Midian* had *Ephab*, *Epher*, *Hanock*, *Abidab*, and *Eldaah*, *Gen. xxv. 2*, &c. And the Footsteps we find of these in History (according to the best Conjectures) are such as follow. From *Zimram*, in all Probability, were descended the *Zamarens*, a People mentioned by *Pliny*, *Natural History* l. 6. c. 28. From *Sheba*, the *Sabeans*, mentioned in *Job*, i. 15. From *Dedan*, the *Dedamim*, mentioned in *Isaiab*, xx. 13. From *Midian*, the *Midianites*, mentioned in several Places. From *Shuab*, the *Shuites*, mentioned in *Job*, ii. 11. From *Ephab*, was a Town of the same Name, mentioned by *Isaiab*, lx. 6. From *Hanock*, a Country call'd *Canaana*, mentioned by *Pliny*, *Natural History* l. 6. c. 28. And (to name no more) from *Medan*, a Country call'd *Mediana*, in which is the famous City of *Mecca*, where *Mahomet* was born. *Bedford's Chronology*, l. 3. c. 4. and *Well's Geography of the Old Testament*, Vol. I.

† This Account of *Abraham*'s Death is given by way of *Anticipation*: for when the Text has recited his Sons, and their Settlement, it brings him, and *Ismael* to their Graves; not that they died before the Birth of his two Grandsons, *Jacob* and *Esan*, as the Text has plac'd Things (for *Abraham* liv'd till they were fifteen Years old, and *Ismael* till they were sixty three) but, having no more to say of the Father and the Son, *Moses* here concludes their History at once. *Lightfoot*.



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## The OBJECTION.

“ **B**UT how great soever the Name  
“ of the Patriarch *Abraham* may  
“ be thought, there are some Grounds to  
“ believe, that he did not deserve proper-  
“ ly all the Commendations, that have  
“ been heap’d on him. The sacred Histo-  
“ rian indeed has been very copious upon  
“ this Subject. He has employ’d no less  
“ than seventeen *Chapters* in recording the  
“ Transactions of his Life, and has drawn  
“ some Parts of his Character in very fair  
“ Colours. He has represented him \* as  
“ a strenuous Opposer of Idolatry, and a  
“ zealous Promoter of the true Worship  
“ of God ; wise and prudent, humble and  
“ condescending, generous and hospitable ;  
“ with a Courage undaunted, a Faith  
“ impregnable, and a Resolution able to  
“ surmount all Difficulties ; honour’d and  
“ beloved by his own Family, familiar  
“ with Kings and Princes, conversant with  
“ Angels, and intimate with God. But  
“ notwithstanding \* all this Profusion of  
“ Praise, upon a nearer Enquiry, we shall  
“ find, that some Passages have fallen from

“ his Pen, which darken, and obscure  
“ his Hero’s Character not a little. For,  
“ (b) WHAT Apology can be made for  
“ his Denial of his Wife, at his going  
“ down into *Egypt*, and at *Gerar* ? He,  
“ who was under the immediate Guidance  
“ of God, and by whose Direction he left  
“ his Country, might have adventur’d to  
“ tell the Truth, and, in so doing, have  
“ committed his Wife to the divine  
“ Protection, with a much better Grace,  
“ than in the Method he took of enga-  
“ ging her in the Prevarication. Had he  
“ done this but once indeed, we might  
“ have called it the Effect of some violent  
“ Fear, or Apprehension of Danger,  
“ which put him upon an Evasion not so  
“ commendable ; but when we find him  
“ repeating the same Fallacy to *Abimelech*,  
“ that he had us’d before to *Pharoah*, and  
“ laying it down for a constant Rule of  
“ Practice, that his Wife, because she was  
“ beautiful, should in every strange Coun-  
“ try, pass for his Sister ; we can hardly  
“ forbear thinking, (c) that he had a secret  
“ Intent

\* The *Jewish* Writers tell us, that *Abraham* was bred up in the Religion of the *Zabii*, who, in those early Times, made Images or Representations of the Sun, Moon, and Stars to worship, and that his Father *Terah* was a Maker, and Seller of these Images ; that *Abraham*, being well skill’d in the Astronomy of those Times, learn’d from thence, that the celestial Bodies could neither make, nor move themselves by their own Power, but that there was one only God, who created, preserv’d, and govern’d all other Things, and that therefore they ought to worship him alone ; that his Father *Terah*, going from home about particular Business, and leaving *Abraham* in the Shop to sell the Images, he, in his Absence, broke them all, except the largest of them ; that, upon this *Terah* being angry, brought *Abraham* before the chief King of the *Assyrian* Monarchy to be punish’d for this Crime ; that the King, being one of the *Magi*, commanded *Abraham* to worship the Fire, and, upon his Refusal, order’d him to be thrown into an hot burning Furnace, but that *Abraham* came out unhurt in the Presence, and to the Admiration, of them all. *Maimonides* in *Mor. Nevoc.* l. 3. c. 29. *Jad. Chaz.* de Idololatriâ, c. 1. *Schafschetb.* p. 8. *Incassu*, Part. 9. Fol. 1. But some think that this whole Story rose from taking the Word *Ur* to signify the Fire, as it is in the *Hebrew*, and thence interpreting the Saying of God to *Abraham* in this Manner, *I am the Lord, that brought thee out of the Fire of the Chaldeans, to give thee this Land to inherit it.* Since it is expressly said, however, (Gen. xi. 31.) that *Terah*, *Lot*, *Abraham*, and *Sarah* his Wife, came all forth together out of *Ur of the Chaldees*, it may therefore very properly be taken for a City dedicated to the Fire, which was there principally worshipped, and from thence it might take its Name.

\* Profane Authors (if possible) say more in the Praise and Commendation of *Abraham*, than do the sacred, but there is Reason enough to believe, that their Accounts are loaded with Fictions. Some have averred, that he reigned at *Damascus* ; others, that he dwelt a long Time in *Egypt*, and taught the *Egyptians* Astronomy and Arithmetick. Some say that he invented Letters, and the *Hebrew* Language ; that he was the Author of several Works, and, among others, of a famous Book, intitled *Jesira*, or the Creation : And, among the *Persians*, so great a Man was he accounted, that the *Magi*, or Worshipers of Fire, believe *Zoroastres*, (who was their Prophet) to be the same with the Patriarch *Abraham*. *Cabnet’s Dictionary.*

(b) *Bayle’s Dictionary* under the Word *Sarah*.

(c) Christianity as old, &c. p. 248.



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“ Intent in this Transaction to betray her  
“ Chastity, and, by an infamous Lye, to  
“ make a Market of her Honour and Vir-  
“ tue; since the History acknowledges,  
“ that, by this Conduct, he got from one  
“ King, (d) *who treated him well for her*  
“ *Sake*, Cattle in Abundance; and from  
“ the other, (e) *a thousand Pieces of Sil-*  
“ *ver, besides Sheep, and Oxen, and Men*  
“ *Servants, and Women Servants.*

“ WHAT Apology can be made for  
“ his taking *Hagar* to Wife, and there-  
“ by not only establishing Polygamy (for  
“ which he has been quoted ever since)  
“ but expressing a Distrust likewise of  
“ God's Veracity, by endeavouring to  
“ have Children by her, when God had  
“ so often promised him Issue by *Sarah*?  
“ *Sarah*, perhaps, might be a Woman  
“ of an easy Temper, and ready to con-  
“ nive at her Husband's Failings: But to  
“ have her introduced, as soliciting her  
“ Husband to commit Adultery with her  
“ Maid, is somewhat incongruous; and  
“ the more rational Supposition is, that  
“ what he did of this Kind was more  
“ from his own Appetite, than his Wife's  
“ Request, and possibly, with a Purpose to  
“ make the Experiment on which Side  
“ the Default, in their not having Chil-  
“ dren, might lie.

“ WHAT Apology can be made for  
“ his severe Treatment of *Hagar* and  
“ *Ismael*, in sending them both away  
“ into the wide World, in order to seek  
“ their Fortune? *Ismael*, perhaps, might  
“ be a waggish Boy, that, upon one  
“ Occasion or other, had put some little  
“ Trick upon *Isaac*, which his Mother  
“ perceiving might fall into a Passion,  
“ and pertinaciously insist, that both the  
“ Mother and Son should, that Moment,  
“ be turned out of Doors, which the poor  
“ Patriarch, to preserve Family-Peace,  
“ might possibly be induced to do; but  
“ then he should have certainly sent them  
“ away in a better *Plight*, than we find he  
“ did. (f) He is all along represented as

“ a Person of great Wealth and Opulence:  
“ and therefore to have made some compe-  
“ tent Provision for her and her Son, is no  
“ more than what Justice, as well as com-  
“ mon Compassion, exacted of him; but  
“ to send a Woman into a desolate Wil-  
“ derness, with a little Child in her Arms,  
“ and with no more than one Bottle of  
“ Water, and such a Quantity of Bread as  
“ she could carry, out of a Family, where  
“ she had, for a long Time, lived in  
“ Affluence and Plenty, is such cruel and  
“ barbarous Usage, as can hardly be sup-  
“ posed to proceed from the *divine*  
“ *Direction.*

“ ABOVE all, what Apology can be  
“ made for his Intent to sacrifice his Son  
“ *Isaac*? (g) That God is to be obeyed  
“ above all Things, and even in Opposi-  
“ tion sometimes to the Passions and Af-  
“ fections, which he hath made connatural  
“ to us, is not to be deny'd: And yet this  
“ we may lay down for a certain Maxim,  
“ that the Lord of the Universe governs  
“ himself by the eternal Rules of Rea-  
“ son, and can neither himself act, nor  
“ command his Creatures to act, in any  
“ Instance, contrary to them. Since  
“ therefore, the Command of slaying an  
“ innocent Child is a Contradiction of that  
“ eternal Rule of Reason, by which Pa-  
“ rents are obliged to preserve their Off-  
“ spring, it is not to be supposed, that  
“ such a Command ever came from God.  
“ Much more probable it is, that it might  
“ be the Delusion of some wicked Spirit,  
“ delighting in Cruelty and Blood; and  
“ yet we find the Patriarch not making  
“ the least Demur upon this Occasion, (h)  
“ nor once expostulating for the Life of  
“ his Son; tho', at another Time, he could  
“ be importunate enough for the Pardon  
“ of an impious, inhospitable, and incestu-  
“ ous City.

“ (i) *He believed in the Lord*, we are  
“ told, *and his Faith was imputed to him*  
“ *for Righteousness*; and yet, in the very  
“ next Verse but one, we find him doubt-

“ ing

From Gen.  
xx—xxv. 11.

(d) Gen. xii. 16.  
Christianity as old, &c. p. 97.

(e) Chap. xx. 16.

(h) Lord Shaftsbury's Characteristics, Vol. III. p. 10.

(f) Shuckford's Connection, Vol. II. 1. 6.

(g) Chri-  
(i) Gen. xv. 6.



A. M.  
2108, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1896, &c.

“ ing of the divine Promise concerning the  
“ Possession of the Land of *Canaan*, and  
“ requiring some Sign or Token from God,  
“ *whereby shall I know that I shall in-*  
“ *herit it?* A Friend he was reputed to  
“ the true Worship of God, and a bitter  
“ Enemy to all Idolatry; and yet we find  
“ him planting such Groves, as were (*k*)  
“ afterwards *forbidden*, and ordered to be  
“ *cut down, and burnt with Fire*: And,  
“ as he gave Occasion for these idolatrous  
“ Places, so it is not unlikely, that the  
“ barbarous Custom of Men's *sacrificing*  
“ *their Children to Devils*, might be  
“ introduced, in Imitation of this At-  
“ tempt of *Abraham's* to offer up his  
“ Son.

“ So that, upon the Whole, this great  
“ *Friend and Favourite* of God, as he is  
“ call'd, was not a whit better than his  
“ Neighbours; since to his Wife *Sarah*  
“ he was *perfidious*, and to his Wife *Ha-*  
“ *gar inhumane*; turned the latter away  
“ shamefully, and would have prostituted  
“ the former for Gain; to both his Sons  
“ was *cruel* and unnatural, for as much as  
“ he *expelled* the one, and would have  
“ *destroyed* the other; was guilty of *Lying*  
“ and Diffimulation towards Men, of  
“ *Distrust* and Diffidence towards God;  
“ and perhaps gave Occasion to the most  
“ horrid Kind of *Idolatry*, that ever was  
“ invented, *the Oblations of Sons and*  
“ *Daughters to infernal Spirits*.

“ THE like, if not worse, may be said  
“ of his Nephew *Lot*; for (*l*) what can  
“ we conceive more vile and abominable,  
“ than the Offer of prostituting his own  
“ Daughters to a Pack of outrageous *So-*  
“ *domites*? The Laws of Hospitality may  
“ engage a Man indeed to do much, but  
“ never surely to commit such an Enor-  
“ mity, even for the Acquisition of the  
“ greatest Good. His Daughters too seem  
“ to have had too deep a Tincture of the  
“ Vices of *Sodom*, when they were not  
“ afraid to make their Father drunk, in  
“ order to go to bed to him; nor asham'd

“ to call their incestuous Issue by such From Gen. XX—XXV. 11.  
“ Names, as would perpetuate the Me-  
“ mory of the Fact.

“ HAD the Father indeed fallen into  
“ these Crimes but once, something might  
“ have been imputed to the Imbecility of  
“ his Age, and the intoxicating Quality  
“ of the Liquor, which at first perhaps  
“ he might not perceive; but to be guilty  
“ of Drunkenness and Incest two Nights  
“ successively, argues a Propensity to  
“ Vice, and is no small Indication of an  
“ abandoned Character.

“ IN this Light has *Moses* represented  
“ some Part of the Conduct of the Uncle  
“ and his Nephew, and, in the Course  
“ of their History, has related several  
“ other Things, highly incredible, and  
“ incongruous to Reason. For,

“ WHAT an odd Character is that of  
“ *Melchizedeck*, a Kind of Linsey-wool-  
“ sey Brother, part King, and part Priest,  
“ to whom *Abraham* gave the *Tithes* of  
“ *all*; and especially, if we take in the  
“ additional Titles, which the Author to  
“ the *Hebrews* gives him, (*m*) of being  
“ *without Father, without Mother, with-*  
“ *out Descent; having neither Beginning*  
“ *of Days, nor End of Life; but being*  
“ *made like unto the Son of God, and*  
“ *abiding a Priest continually*.

“ WHAT a strange Prophecy is that  
“ concerning *Ismael*, (*n*) *he will be a*  
“ *wild Man*, or, as it is in the Original, *a*  
“ *wild Ass-man; his Hand shall be against*  
“ *every Man, and every Man's Hand*  
“ *against him, and he shall dwell in the*  
“ *Presence of all his Brethren*? Cold  
“ Comfort, one would think, it should be  
“ to *Hagar*, in her distressed and discon-  
“ solate Condition, and enough indeed to  
“ frighten her out of her Senses, to be  
“ told by an Angel, that what she had  
“ conceived in her Womb would become  
“ a Monster, part Man, and part Ass;  
“ and whose Fortune should be to live all  
“ his Life long by Thieving and *Mo-*  
“ *roading*.

“ + WHAT

(k) Deut. xvi. 21.

(l) Le Clerc's Commentary.

(m) Heb. vii. 3, &c.

(n) Gen. xvi. 12.



A. M.  
2108, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1896, &c.

“ † WHAT a senseless, as well as im-  
“ modest a Rite, is that of Circumcision,  
“ (supposing it to be of *divine* Institution)  
“ for a Sign of a Covenant between God  
“ and *Abraham*? Where is the Sense of  
“ mutilating the Infants Body, and there-  
“ by endangering its Life, as soon as it is  
“ born? If a corporeal Mark was abso-  
“ lutely necessary to distinguish *Abra-*  
“ *ham's* Posterity from the rest of Man-  
“ kind, the Divine Wisdom, one would  
“ think, should have pitched upon some  
“ other Part of the Body, rather than  
“ that, which common Modesty labours to  
“ conceal. (o) The more probable Opi-  
“ nion therefore is, that a Practice, so un-  
“ accountable in itself, was not of God's  
“ Appointment, but what *Abraham* learnt  
“ when he was in *Egypt*, and afterwards  
“ imposed upon his Posterity to make them  
“ more acceptable to that Nation, on  
“ whom he foresaw that they were for  
“ some Ages to depend.

“ WHAT a *romantick* Story is that of  
“ *Abraham's* fighting four victorious Kings,  
“ and putting them to the Rout, with a  
“ small Handful of his own Domesticks;  
“ especially when these Kings (according

“ to the Sense of the best Commentators)  
“ were no petty Princes, but the Gover-  
“ nours of vast Provinces, under the Com-  
“ mand of the *Assyrian* Monarch?

“ WHAT a ridiculous Attempt is that  
“ of *Abraham* to sacrifice his Son, who,  
“ (according to the best Computation) was  
“ then in the Prime of his Life, at least,  
“ of an Age sufficient to make a Resi-  
“ stance; and Resistance we may be sure  
“ he would not fail to make, rather than  
“ suffer himself to be *butchered*?

“ BUT above all, what an incredible  
“ Story is that of *Lot's* Wife's *Metamor-*  
“ *phosis*, of her being changed into a Pillar  
“ of Salt, merely for turning about to see  
“ the Destruction of the City, where she  
“ had so long lived; \* especially confide-  
“ ring the several Improvements which  
“ later Historians have made upon the Ac-  
“ count, too light, and too improbable,  
“ ever to be named?

“ THESE, and many more, are the  
“ Incongruities, which occur in this Pe-  
“ riod of Time; enough to stagger our  
“ Belief, and to call the Authority of the  
“ *sacred* Penman into Question.”

BUT,

† The Manner of this Ceremony's being perform'd, whether in the publick Synagogue, or in private Houses, is this,  
—— The Person, who is appointed to be the *God-father*, sets down upon a Seat, with a Silk-cushion provided for that Purpose, and settles the Child in a proper Posture on his Knees, when he, who is to circumcise him (which, by the bye, is accounted a great Honour among the *Jews*) opens the Blankets. Some make Use of Silver Tweezers, to take up so much of the *Prepuce*, as they design to cut off, but others take it up with their Fingers. Then he, who circumcises the Child, holding the Razor in his Hand, says, *Blessed be thou, O Lord, who hast commanded us to be circumcis'd*; And, while he is saying this, cuts off the thick Skin of the *Prepuce*, and then, with his Thumb Nails, tears off a finer Skin still remaining. After this he sucks the Blood, which flows plentifully upon this Occasion, and spits it out into a Cup full of Wine: Then he puts some Dragon's Blood upon the Wound, some Coral Powder, and other Things to stop the Bleeding, and so covers up the Part affected. When this is done, he takes the Cup, wherein he had spit the Blood; moistens his Lips therewith; and then, blessing both that, and the Child, gives him the Name, which his Father had appointed, and, at the same Time, pronounces these Words of *Ezekiel*, *I said unto thee, when thou wast in thy Blood, live*, *Ezek. xvi. 6.* after which, the whole Congregation repeats the 128th Psalm, *Blessed is every Man, that feareth the Lord*, &c. and so the Ceremony concludes. Only we must observe, that besides the Seat, appointed for the God-father, there is always another left empty, and is design'd, some say, for the Prophet *Elias*, who, as they imagine, is invisibly present at all Circumcisions. *Calmet's* Dictionary, under the Word *Circumcision*.

(o) Lord *Shaftsbury's* Charact. Vol. III. p. 52. *Marshall's* Can. Chron. p. 72. and Christianity as old, &c. p. 94.

\* The *Jewish* Doctors, as well as some *Christian* Fathers, labour to persuade us, that it was extant in their Days; that it was no Ways impair'd, and wou'd last as long as the World endur'd; that what it loses by any Accident, or the Injuries of the Weather, is daily supplied, so that it continues ever the same; and, in short, that it has all the Signatures and Infirmities of the Sex attending it, even as if it were alive. *Saurin's* Dissertations 18. Whether it was *Tertullian*, or *St Cyprian*, that was the Author of these Verses, but so it is, that the Poet, be he who he will, has tack'd together several of these incredible Things.

In fragilem mutata salem stetit illa, sepulchrum  
Ipsaque Imago sui, formam sine Corpore servans.  
Durat adhuc etenim nudâ statione sub Æthram,  
Nec pluvius dilapsa, situ, nec diruta ventis.  
Quinetium siquis mutilaverit advena formam,

NUMB. XX.

Protinus in sese suggestu vulnera complent.  
Dicitur & vivens alio sub Corpore sexus  
Munificos solito dispungere sanguine Menfes.

*Watson*, Miscel. Sacra, Tom. 2.

II h h h



A. M.  
2108, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1896, &c.

Answer'd by  
showing why  
Moses is so  
prolix in the  
History of A-  
braham.

BUT, we certainly judge wrong of the Merits of any Author, when we suffer our Prejudice to blind our Understanding, and to hinder it from attending to its chief Drift and Design. The great End which *Moses* had in writing this Part of his History, was to instruct the *Jews* in their Rise and Original, their Election and Separation from the rest of Mankind: And therefore fit it was, when he enter'd upon the History of their great Founder *Abraham*, in whom they became a *peculiar People*, a chosen Generation, and a Royal Priesthood, (as the Apostle (*p*) styles them) that he should lay aside his usual *Conciseness*, and endeavour to expatiate a little upon so useful, and so agreeable a Subject.

THE Spirit of God very well foresaw, that *Abraham's* Character wou'd become renown'd in future Generations; that not only the *Jews*, but several other Nations wou'd lay claim to him, as their Progenitor; that not only the Saints and Prophets in the *Old Testament* wou'd make him the chief Pattern of Faith, and Obedience to God's Commands, but that, even under the *New*, his Example wou'd be propounded for our Imitation, and (*q*) *his Bosom* be made the happy Receptacle of the Souls of the Righteous, between their Death and their Resurrection; and therefore it is no Wonder, that he led the holy Penman into a longer Recital of the Life and Adventures of a Person, who is stil'd the *Friend of God*, and *Father of the Faithful*; who was the great Founder of the very Nation, he was now writing to; whose Sons were to be *Kings and Princes* in their several distant Countries, and in whose Seed all the Nations of the Earth were to be blessed.

That the Pa-  
triarchs were  
not impeccable.

WE must observe however, that one great Error in those, that have undertaken to vindicate the Holy Scriptures, is, their Unwillingness to suppose any Faults in the Lives of the antient *Patriarchs*; and therefore they study to apologize for every thing they did, and sometimes labour even to

consecrate their very Vices. Their Opini-  
on is, that the *Holy Spirit* has prescrib'd them as *Patterns*, every Way worthy of our Imitation; and therefore they think it a Disparagement to the Scriptures themselves, if any Blemish or Defect should occur in these Men's Characters; whereas the Scriptures have no Manner of Concern in any such Thing. Their Purpose is to represent Mankind, as they are cloath'd with Infirmities, and beset with Temptations to Sin; and it is a glorious Instance of their Truth and Veracity, when we find the Faults and Failings of some of their greatest *Worthies* related, as they really happened, and set in a true Light, without Extenuation or Excuse. "The  
" most celebrated of the Saints of God,  
" (*r*) says *St Austin*, are not impeccable;  
" and from their Faults there is no arguing  
" to the Prejudice of the *Book*, in which,  
" as we find them recorded as Matter of  
" History, so we find them condemn'd as  
" Matter of *Morality*. God has informed  
" us, says he, of what pass'd, but not au-  
" thoriz'd it, and set the Example before  
" us, not for a *Pattern*, but for a Warn-  
" ing."

ABRAHAM, in the Age wherein he liv'd, was certainly accounted a Man of great Piety and Worth. (*s*) We have the Testimony of several *Heathen* Authors in his Favour, and *Berosus* in particular, (*t*) (as he is quoted by *Josephus*) give us this Character of him, viz. *That in the tenth Generation, after the Flood, there was a Man among the Chaldeans, who was very just, and great, and sought after heavenly Things*. But, notwithstanding this, it must be acknowledg'd, that, in this Instance of denying his Wife *Sarah*, he was guilty, at least, of a manifest Dissimulation.

That Abra-  
ham, in deny-  
ing his Wife  
*Sarah*, was  
culpable.

'Tis in vain to say, (*u*) that she was really his Sister by another Wife, whom his Father *Terah* might marry, after the Death of his Mother; for this brings upon him the Charge of *Incest*. 'Tis in vain to say,

(*p*) 1 Pet. ii. 9.  
1. 1. §. 10.

(*q*) Matt. viii. 11.  
(*r*) Lib. 1. c. 3.

(*s*) *Faustus*, 1. 22. c. 41.  
(*t*) *Calmet's* Dictionary under the Word *Sarah*.

(*v*) Vid. *Grot. de Verit.*



A. M.  
2108, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1896, &c.

say, (x) that, as he was a *Prophet*, he was directed by the Holy Spirit to make use of this *Subterfuge*, in order to preserve his Life; for this is making God the *Author of Sin*. 'Tis in vain to say, (y) that what he declared was Truth, tho' not the whole Truth; that he conceal'd what was proper, and told nothing that was false; because his declaring her to be his Sister was in Effect denying her to be his Wife, which was a direct *Falshood*. Men certainly have a Right to conceal their Sentiments, upon several Occasions, by a prudent Silence; but whenever they make Use of Words, and pretend thereby to discover their Thoughts, they impose upon their Hearers, if they do not really express what they pretend: And in this the very Formality of Lying does consist, namely, in a settled Intention to deceive others. " (z) For, whatever is said, " whether in itself it be true or false, " whether it agrees with the Thoughts of " the Speaker or not, yet, if it plainly " tends to deceive the Hearer; if he, who " says it, perceives the Tendency, and accordingly uses it to this End, however " disguised it is, under whatever Forms " it is express'd, it is, to all Intents and " Purposes, a Lye."

'Tis in vain then to pretend to foil the *Patriarch* from the Imputation of Lying or Diffimulation in this Case; but then this may be said in Extenuation of his Fault, — That it proceeded from a Weakness of Faith, and a Prevalency of Fear, which are sometimes found to be incident to the best of Men. He consider'd himself as a Stranger, among a licentious Sort of People, and exposed to the Power of an *arbitrary* Government; and, from a Principle of worldly Caution, both to preserve his own Life, and his Wife's Modesty, he concluded that this would be the best Expedient: but much more wisely had he done, had he committed the whole Matter to God's Management, in Reliance

on his Promises, and, in Confidence of his Protection.

It cannot however, with any tolerable Construction, be charged upon him, that he went about to *betray his Wife's Chastity*, since, according to his present Sentiments, he took the most effectual Method to prevent it. (a) For, in declaring her to be his Sister, he made it known that she was committed to his Care and Disposal; and from hence he suppos'd it would come to pass, that, if any of the Country was minded to make his Addresses to the Sister, he wou'd, of Course, come and apply himself to the Brother. The first Motions of Love he knew were most impetuous, and apt to hurry Men into Violence and Outrage; and therefore he thought with himself, that, if he should pass for her Husband, such, as were in love with her, wou'd have no other Way of accomplishing their Desires, but at the Expence of his Life: Whereas, if he pass'd for her Brother, Time might be gain'd, the Treaty of Marriage prolong'd, and several unforeseen Accidents happen, that might give the divine Providence a seasonable Opportunity to interpose in his Favour, as we find it did.

NOR can the Presents, which both *Pharaoh* and *Abimelech* gave *Abraham* upon the Delivery of his Wife, with any Justice, be imputed to his Management; since they were *voluntary* Acknowledgments for his interceding for them; Oblations of *Gratitude* for their Recovery from the *fore Plagues*, wherewith God had afflicted them; and a Kind of Commutation for the Injury and Affront, they had put upon Persons, so highly favour'd by God, that, (b) at what Time they went from one Nation to another, from one Kingdom to another People, he suffer'd no Man to do them wrong, but reprov'd even Kings for their Sakes.

HAGAR, according to the Opinion of some of the *Rabbins*, who love to magnify

From Gen.  
xx—xxv. 11.

But he had no  
Design to be-  
tray her Cha-  
stity.

In marrying  
Hagar he was  
excusable.

(x) Vid. *Heidegger's Hist. Patriarch*. Vol. II. Exercit. 4.

(y) Bishop *Smalbridge's* Sermon of *Lying*.

cv. 13, 14.

(y) *Waterland's Scripture Vindication*, Part 1.

(a) *Heidegger's Hist. Patriarch*. Vol. II. Exercit. 4.

(b) *Psal.*



A. M.  
2108, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1896, &c.

nify every Matter, was one of the Daughters of *Pharaoh*, King of *Egypt*, whom he sent along with *Abraham*, when he dismissed him so honourably: She was an *Egyptian* indeed, very probably one of those *Servants*, that were given to *Abraham*, and was employ'd about *Sarah's* Person as her Waiting-Maid; but we have no Grounds to think, that a Woman of her Extraction, (had she been *Pharaoh's* Daughter) wou'd have condescended to serve in any Capacity. However this be, *Sarah*, seeing herself now grown old and barren, and knowing that God had promis'd a numerous Posterity to *Abraham*, believ'd that, in order to contribute to the Accomplishment of these Promises, she ought to give her Servant to him for a Wife; and accordingly she is introduc'd, as making the first Offer: (c) *Behold, now the Lord hath restrain'd me from bearing, I pray thee go in unto my Maid; it may be, that I may obtain Children by her.* This Proposal, (as St *Cbrysoftom* (d) observes) and the soft Manner of making it, discover'd a very uncommon Love and Respect to her Husband; that she herself shou'd persuade, and urge him to this Expedient, in order to make him easy in that Particular, which gave him so much Disturbance, the Want of Issue, the Default of which she suppos'd to be owing to herself: \* And, 'twas purely in Compliance to this Solicitation of her's, that he took *Hagar* to his Bed. *Sarah* undoubtedly, was by far the more beautiful Woman, at least if so good Judges, as the King of *Egypt* and his Subjects may be depended on: *Abraham* had now liv'd many Years, without giving any Occasion to have his Modesty and Continence suspected: *Hagar* too was no more than his Wife's Servant, and inferior to her in Person, as much as in Condition:

In a short Time after, when, upon her Conception, she grew undutiful to her Mistress, *Abraham* never interposed in her Favour, but left her entirely to her Lady's Discretion: From all which Circumstances it appears, that his taking *Hagar* to be his concubinary Wife, was not from any Motive of Sensuality, but from a true Principle of conjugal Affection to *Sarah*.

(e) God had indeed promis'd him the Land of *Canaan*, and a numerous Issue to succeed him; but whether that Son, from whom that Issue was to spring, was properly to be his own, or only adoptive; or, if his own, whether begotten of *Sarah*, or of some other Woman, was not reveal'd to him. Seeing, therefore, he had no Child of his own, and yet stedfastly believed the Promises of God; the only Way that he could devise, whereby to have these Promises accomplish'd, was by Way of Adoption, and therefore he says, (f) *Lo! one born in my House is my Heir*; upon which God clears the first of these Doubts to him, viz. whether his Seed was to be natural, or adoptive; (g) *This shall not be thine Heir, but one, that shall come forth out of thine own Bowels, shall be thine Heir*: But still the second Doubt remain'd, whether he was to be his Heir by *Sarah*, or by some other Woman, which, for the farther Trial of his Patience, God thought proper to conceal. No Wonder then, if *Abraham* (having no longer Hope of Issue by his Wife, finding her indeed as impatient for a Child as himself, and desirous to have such a Child, as she might account her own, being begotten by her Husband and her Maid) yielded to her Importunity, not so much to pleasure himself, as to gratify her Desire. And this seems to be the Reason why *Sarah* made Choice

From Gen.  
xx—xxv. 11.

(c) Gen. xvi. 2.

(d) In Locum, Hom. 38.

\* The Words of St *Justin* upon this Occasion are very nervous, and very significant. *Ufus enim est Hagare* (scilicet *Abraham*) *ad generandum prolem, non ad explendam Libidinem, non insultans, sed potius obediens Conjugi; quæ suæ sterilitati credidit esse solatium, si secundum ancillæ uterum (quoniam natura non poterat) voluntate fecerit suum. Nulla hic est cupido Lascivie, nulla nequitie turpitudine. Ab uxore, causâ prolis, ancilla marito traditur; à marito, causâ prolis, accipitur. De Civit. Dei. l. 16. c. 25. where he concludes, with these exclamatory Words, O virum viriliter utentem feminis, conjugè temperanter, ancillâ obtemperanter, nullâ intemperanter!*

(e) *Augustinus* contra *Fauslum*, l. 22. c. 32.

(f) Gen. xv. 3.

(g) Ver. 4.



A. M.  
2108, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1896, &c.

Choice of a *Slave* (as *Hagar* is call'd in the Text) rather than a *free Woman*, to bring to her Husbands Bed, viz. (b) that the Child, which the former might happen to bear, might, *imputatively* at least, be accounted hers; whereas one conceiv'd by a Woman that was *free*, would properly belong to the Mother herself.

WHETHER *Polygamy*, in the Age of the Patriarchs, was innocent, or no, is a Question that has much employ'd the Pens of the Learned. \* Most of the ancient Fathers of the Church maintain its *Lawfulness*, and (i) some of our later Divines can hardly persuade themselves, that a Practice, which the most holy and venerable Men ordinarily engag'd in, and, during that Engagement, continued an intimate Conversation and Familiarity with God; a Practice, which God never blam'd in them, even when he sharply reproveth other Vices, and for which they themselves never shew'd the least Remorse, or Tokens of Repentance, shou'd be detestable in the Sight of God. Our blessed Saviour, who has restor'd Matrimony to its primitive Institution, has certainly declar'd it to be *criminal*; but whether it was so, under a less perfect Dispensation, is not so well agreed. At present, if we suppose it only *tolerated* by God, in the Time of the *Patriarchs*, we shall soon perceive another Inducement for *Abraham's* complying with his Wife's Request; and that is, viz. The passionate Desire for a numerous Progeny, which, in those Days, was very prevalent; so very prevalent, that we find Men accounting of their Children as their Riches, their Strength, their Glory, and several Families reckoning them up with a Sort of Pride, and

placing the chief of their Renown in the Multitude of them; (k) *For Children, and the Fruit of the Womb, are an Heritage and Gift, that cometh of the Lord; like as Arrows in the Hand of a Giant, so are young Children. Happy is the Man, that has a Quiver full of them; he shall not be ashamed, when he speaketh with his Enemies in the Gate.*

From Gen.  
xx—xxv. 11.

THUS the Desire of a numerous Issue, the Entreaty of a beloved Wife, and the suppos'd Innocence of *Concubinage* in that Age, may, in some measure, plead *Abraham's* Excuse in assuming *Hagar* to his Bed: But, then, what shall we say for his turning her away so abruptly, and in a starving Condition, after she had lived so long with him in the Capacity of a Wife, and had borne him a Son? To clear up this Matter, we must enquire a little into the Time and Occasion, as well as the Manner, and Consequence of this her Dismissal.

THE whole Account of this Transaction is thus related by the sacred Historian. (l) *And the Child (meaning the Child Isaac) grew, and was weaned, and Abraham made a great Feast the same Day, that Isaac was weaned. And Sarah saw the Son of Hagar, the Egyptian, which she had borne unto Abraham, mocking; Wherefore she said unto Abraham, cast out this Bond-Woman, and her Son, for the Son of the Bond-Woman shall not be Heir with my Son, even with Isaac. And the Thing was very grievous in Abraham's Sight, because of his Son. And God said unto Abraham, let it not be grievous in thy Sight, because of the Lad, and because of thy Bond-Woman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her Voice; for in Isaac shall thy*

In dismissing her, and her Son, was not cruel, or hard-hearted.

I i i

(b) *Heidegger's Hist. Patriar. Vol. II. Exercit. 6.*

\* The Words of St *Ambrose*, l. 1. c. 4. concerning the Patriarch *Abraham* are very remarkable, and comprehend indeed the Sentiments of most of the rest. Consideremus primum, quia ante legem *Mosis*, & ante Evangelium, fuit, nondum interdictum adulterium videbatur. Poena criminis ex tempore legis est, quae crimen inhibuit, nec ante legem ulla rei damnatio est, sed ex lege. Non ergo in legem commisit *Abraham*, sed legem praevenit. Deus in *Paradiso* licet *Conjugium* laudaverit, non tamen *Adulterium* damnaverat. *Dorander, Tostatus, Selden, Grotius*, and others, are clearly of Opinion, that, before the Promulgation of the Law, *Polygamy* was no Sin; but as their Error turns upon this, that the first Institution of Marriage between one Pair in *Paradise* was not design'd by God for a Law, so have they receiv'd an ample Confutation from the learned *Heidegger* in his *Historia Patriar. Vol. I. Exercit. 1. and Exercit. 7. and Vol. II. Exercit. 6.*

(i) Vid. *Saurin* in *Dissertation* 19.

(k) *Psal. cxxvii. 3, &c.*

(l) *Gen. xxi. 8, &c.*



A. M.  
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*thy Seed be called : and also of the Son of the Bond-Woman will I make a Nation, because he is thy Seed. And Abraham rose up early in the Morning, and took Bread, and a Bottle of Water, and gave it unto Hagar (putting it on her Shoulder) and the Child, and sent her away, and she departed, and wandered in the Wilderness of Beer-sheba.*

The Nature of  
Weaning-  
Feasts.

WHAT the Manner of celebrating this *Weaning-Feast*, or *Feast of Initiation*, was, we can only conjecture from certain Circumstances, and some parallel Passages, and Customs. There are no more, than the Weaning of *Isaac*, and the Weaning of *Samuel*, (two very extraordinary Persons, both foretold by the Spirit of Prophecy; and both miraculously born) which are taken Notice of in the sacred History. And (if we may be allow'd to suppose a Parallel between them) as the Feast at the Weaning of *Samuel* was a sacred Feast, and kept (*m*) *before the Lord*, (for the Child was brought by his Mother to the *Sanctuary*, there presented, and there *initiated*, or dedicated by the High-Priest, whereupon a *Sacrifice* first, and then a *Feast* did ensue ;) so we may suppose, (*n*) 1. That, at the Weaning-Feast of *Isaac*, there was a Burnt-Sacrifice, which *Abraham*, as *Priest* and *Prophet*, might early in the Morning offer, in order to sanctify both the Feast, and those, that were to communicate in it : 2. That there were Changes of Raiment given to all the Guests, and to all the Servants, to keep the Feast in, and that, without these *Festival-Robes*, no one was allow'd to sit down at the Table : 3. That a new Sort of Vesture was given to *Isaac*, as an Habit of Distinction, by which he was declar'd Heir of the Family, and the most honourable, next to his Father : 4. That there was a Dedication of the Child, or an holy *Initiation* of him, in a very religious and solemn Manner, perform'd by both the Parents : 5. That there was probably a Commemoration of the

Entertainment of Angels in *Pilgrims-Habit*, and of the joyful Message then brought, together with the killing of the fatted Calf, and other Provisions made for them : And, 6. That, upon this Occasion, there was certainly a sumptuous Entertainment made for their Guests, suitable to the Character of the Master of the Feast, who was a Prince, as well as a Prophet, and answerable to the End and Design of it, which was to commemorate the highest divine Blessing that could be given, not to one Family only, but to all the Generations of the World.

ON this Festival Occasion it was, very probably, that *Sarah* perceiv'd *Isbmael* treating her Son with Contempt and Derision. The Initiation of *Isaac*, and his Father's Declaration concerning him, which *Isbmael*, who thought he had a *prior* Right, was not able to bear, was enough to exasperate his rough Nature to commit such Rudeness, as could not but break the Merriment of the Feast, and thereupon provoke *Sarah* to exert her Authority, by shewing the Difference between the Son of a *Bond-Woman*, and the Heir apparent of the Family. I say, *to exert her Authority* ; (*o*) For as *Hagar* was *Sarah's* *Dotal* Maid-Servant, she was entirely at her Disposal. *Abraham* had no Cognizance of her ; from his Jurisdiction she was exempt, and by Marriage-Articles (as we call it) reserv'd to her Mistress *in Property* ; and therefore we find God interposing in the Affair, and advising *Abraham*, in all that *Sarah* shou'd say unto him, *to hearken to her Voice* (*p*).

THE Expulsion of *Hagar* and her Son, is represented indeed, by our Translation, under Circumstances somewhat dolorous ; but if we enquire into Particulars, we shall find them not near so full of Distress, as this Representation seems to make them. *Abraham* is said to have sent them away *early in the Morning* ; but this might be done on purpose to prevent what might pass between them, at so sorrowful a Parting,

From Gen.  
xx—xxv. 11.

(m) 1 Sam. i. 24.

(n) *Bibliotheca Bibl.* Vol. I. Occasional Annot. 24.

(o) *Bibliotheca Bibl.* Vol. I.

Occasional Annot. 32. See also the Note at the end of the Objection, Chap. III. of this Book.

(p) Gen.

xvi. 12.



A. M.  
2108, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1896, &c.

ing, from being observ'd by too many Eyes. He is said to have given them *Bread, and a Bottle of Water*; but, as Bread and Water include *Eatables* and *Drinkables* of all Kinds, so there is no doubt to be made but that *Ishmael* was able enough to carry an handsome Competency of Provision for a few Days, or that his Mother might very well carry a large Bottle of Water, or other Liquor, to support them for a Week, or so, while they were travelling thro' the Wilderness. Their whole Misfortune was, in mistaking their Way, and wandering about in the Desert, until their Water was consum'd; but this was a mere Accident, wherein *Abraham* had not the least Concern.

*ISHMAEL* indeed is, in several Places call'd a *Child*, and from thence we may suppose, that he was a Burthen and Incumbrance to his Mother: But, if we look into his Age, we shall find, that, when *Isaac* was born, he was *fourteen*; and therefore allowing two Years between *Isaac's* Birth, and his *Weaning*, he could not be less than *sixteen*, when *Abraham* sent him and his Mother away, and was, consequently, a Youth capable of being a Support and Assistance to her. (g) For the Circumstances of the World, we may observe, at this Time, were such, that it was an easy Matter for any Person to find a sufficient and comfortable Livelihood in it. Mankind were so few, that there was, in every Country, Ground to spare; so that any one, who had Flocks, or a Family, might be permitted to settle any where, to feed and maintain them, and so grow, and increase, and become wealthy; or Creatures in the World were so numerous, that a Person, who had no Flocks or Herds, might, in the Wilderness, and uncultivated Grounds, (as *Ishmael* we find became an *Archer*) find Game enough of all Sorts, whereby to maintain himself, and his Dependants, without doing any Injury, or being molested for so doing.

*ISHMAEL* indeed had, for sixteen

Years, continu'd in *Abraham's* Family, and at first perhaps it might be disputed, whether he, or his Brother *Isaac*, shou'd succeed to their Father's Inheritance: But, after that this Point was determin'd, and God himself had declar'd in the Favour of *Isaac*, he must of Course have become *Isaac's* Bond-Man or Servant, had he continu'd in *Abraham's* Family. So that, it was both kindly, and prudently done of his Father, to take Occasion from *Sarah's* Disgust against him, to *emancipate*, and set him free, by sending him abroad to acquire an *independent* Settlement, which was all the Provision that Parents, in those Days, cou'd make for their younger Children. 'Twas the same Provision, that his Father *Abraham* made for the Sons, which he afterwards had by his Wife *Keturah*; for so we are told, that (r) *he gave all that he had unto Isaac, but unto the Sons of his Concubines he gave Gifts, and sent them away from Isaac his Son, Eastward, unto the East-Country*. Nay, 'twas the same Provision, which *Isaac* made for his Son *Jacob*, tho' he was the Heir of the Blessing. When he went from his Father's House to *Padan-Aran*, we read of no Servants or Equipage attending him, nor any Accommodations prepar'd for his Journey. He was sent (as we call it now-a-days) to seek his Fortune, (s) only instructed to seek it among his Kinsfolk, and Relations and he went to seek it upon so uncertain a Foundation, that we find him most earnestly praying to God to be with him *in the Way he was to go*, not to suffer him to want the Necessaries of Life, but to *give him Bread to eat, and Raiment to put on*: And yet we see, that, by becoming an hired Servant to *Laban*, (t) he both married his Daughters, and, in a few Years, became Master of a very considerable Substance.

It is our Mistake in the Customs of the Times therefore, that makes us imagine, that *Hagar* and *Ishmael* had any hard Usage in their Ejection. Whatever the Nature of their Offence might be, or whatever

From Gen.  
xx—xxv. 11.

(g) *Shuckford's Connection*, Vol. II. l. 7.

(r) Gen. xxv. 6.

(s) *Ibid.* xviii.

(t) *Ibid.* xxx. 43.



A. M.  
2108, &c.  
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1896, &c.

whatever Grounds *Sarah* might have for her Indignation against them, there is no Reason to accuse *Abraham's* Conduct in this Affair, since what he did was pursuant to a divine Direction, which he durst not disobey; was agreeable to the Practice of the Times, wherein he liv'd; and no more than what all other Fathers, in those Days, impos'd upon their younger Sons: Since the Hardships, they suffered, were *accidental*, but the Benefits, which accrued to them, were *design'd*: Since *Abraham*, by this Means, rescu'd them from a State of Servitude for ever; and, according to the divine Prediction, was persuaded, that this would be the only Expedient to make of *Ismael* a flourishing Nation.

Abraham's  
Obedience, not  
to be paral-  
lel'd.

*ABRAHAM's* great Readiness to sacrifice his Son, upon the first Signification of the divine Pleasure, is an Instance of Duty and Obedience, not to be equall'd in all the Records of History. *Sanctioniatho* indeed (as he is quoted by (u) *Eusebius*) tells us of one *Chronus*, King of *Phœnicia*, who, in a Time of great Distress, and extreme Peril of War, took his Son *Jeud* (which, according to the *Phœnician* Language, means *only-begotten*) and, with his own Hand, sacrificed him on an Altar of his own erecting. But, as \* this Action was certainly subsequent to the Times we are now speaking of, there are good Reasons to believe, that the whole Account of it is no more than a Relation of *Abraham's* intended Sacrifice of *Isaac*, bating some Additions and Mistakes. (x) For, whereas it is said of this *Chronus*, that he was the Son of a Father, who had three Children; that himself had one Son only by his Wife, but more by other Women; that he circumcised himself and his Family; and that he sacrificed his only Son with his own Hands; all these Circumstances concur in the Case

of *Abraham*: The chief Difference is, that *Chronus* is by the *Phœnicians* call'd *Israel*, which was properly the Name of *Abraham's* Grandson; but this is a small Mistake, considering that most of the *Heathen* Writers had a general Notion, that *Israel* was the Name of some one famous Ancestor of the *Israelites*, but were not exact in fixing it upon the right Person.

From Gen.  
xx—xxv. 11.

(y) THE only Instance, which seems any Ways to come near the Case before us, is that of *Agamemnon's* consenting that his Daughter *Iphigenia* should be sacrific'd; but the Disparity soon appears, if we consider, that *Agamemnon*, in all Probability, had other Children, and a Queen neither barren, nor old, and yet, sore against his Will, did he comply, and perhaps for Fear of provoking his Subjects in Arms; nor cou'd he bear the Sight of his Daughter's last Minutes, tho' he attain'd thereby his End, viz. the Gratification of his ambitious Views in the War, wherein he was embark'd. Whereas *Abraham* had no other, nor cou'd expect any other Child by his Wife, but this Son, who was a Pledge from Heaven of all the glorious Blessings, that God had promis'd him; and yet, upon this harsh Command, we find him in no Uneasiness or Confusion, but perfectly compos'd and easy, fix'd and resolv'd to put it in Execution, and waving the Weapon in his own Arm, stretch'd out to take away his own Child's Life; tho' he could not but foresee, that, by such an inhuman Act, he wou'd not only exasperate his own Family against him, but expose himself likewise to the Hatred and Indignation of all the Nations round about him.

THE Truth is, several Examples there have been, especially of Persons of a *publick*

(u) *Præp. Evan.* l. i. c. 10.

\* A learned Author, in his *Connection of sacred and profane History*, having, by two different Ways of Computation, prov'd, that *Abraham* was older than *Chronus*, subjoins these Words, "And thus, by both these Accounts, *Chronus* cannot be more antient than *Abraham*, rather *Abraham* appears to be more antient than he: And this must be allow'd to be more evidently true, if we consider, that it was not *Chronus*, the Son of *Ouranus*, who made this Sacrifice of his only Son, but rather *Chronus*, who was call'd *Israel*, and was the Son of *Chronus*, call'd *Ithi*, and therefore still later by one Generation." Vol. II. l. 6.

(x) *Shuckford*, *ibid.* Vol. II. l. 6.

(y) *Bibliotheca Bibl.* Vol. I. Occas. Annot. 23.



A. M.  
2108, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1896, &c.

lick Character, who have sacrific'd themselves, or their nearest Relations: But what has it been to? Even to Desperation, or the Apprehension of human Force and Power; to a wicked and superstitious Custom; to Pride and Vain-glory; or to the Hopes of preventing or stopping some dreadful and publick Calamity: But the Case of *Abraham* is so singularly circumstantiated, that none of all these can be imputed to it: The only Motive we can possibly imagine, must have been his earnest Desire to testify his Obedience to God, in all, even his most arduous Commands.

How he cou'd certainly know that such a Command came from God, will best appear by enquiring a little † into the several Ways, wherein we find God revealing himself to this beloved Patriarch. And, to this Purpose, we must observe, that, at first, he left his own Country and Kindred, by the express Command of God, and went into a strange Land, which God had promis'd to give his Posterity. We are not told, indeed, in what Manner God appear'd to him, when he gave him this Command; but we can hardly think, that a Person of his Gravity and Years wou'd incline to seek unnecessary *Adventures*; nor can we imagine, why his aged

Father should accompany him in them, unless there was a manifest Conviction that the Call was from God.

AFTER he had been for some Time settled in *Haran*, long enough to have his Family and Fortune increas'd in it, and probably long enough to like it, and he contented with it; God commands him thence into another strange Country, in all Appearance no better than that where he then was, and consequently none of his own Option; and there he appear'd to him the second Time, and renew'd his former Promise of giving him *the Land*, whereinto he had thus conducted him (x).

AFTER this, when he was driven by Famine into *Egypt*, God sufficiently manifested his signal Protection of him, by plaguing *Pharaoh* and his House upon his Account. Upon his Return to *Canaan*, he renew'd his Assurance of giving him the promis'd Land; and then it is said, that *the Word of the Lord came to him in a Vision*, wherein the Promise of an Heir, and a numerous Posterity is added to that of *Canaan*; and, as *Abraham* requested a Sign in Confirmation of all this, so God was pleas'd to comply with his Request, and, accordingly, again, he appears to him in a Vision, repeats again the Promise to him, supports the Promise

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by

From Gen.  
xx—xxv. 11.

How he was  
convinc'd, that  
the Command  
of sacrificing  
his Son came  
from God.

† The usual Ways, recorded in the *Old Testament*, of God's revealing himself to his Servants, were by Dreams, by Voices, and by Apparitions. 1. *Dreams* are, in some Places, call'd *Visions*, and *Visions of the Night*, because Persons, under this Form of Revelation, saw Things, and heard Voices, as plainly to all Imagination, as if they had been awake: But what sort of Ideas and Images affected their Minds at such a Time, and how they distinguish'd *divine* Dreams from such, as were purely *natural*, we are no where told; only if we may be allow'd to conjecture, 1st, Such Dreams, as were *Divine*, had none of those confus'd and idle *Phantoms*, which are found in other Dreams, but distinctly represented to their Minds whatever Things, or Beings, God was pleas'd to send, without any Mixture of foreign Images, or Words: 2dly, They were more *lively*, than other Dreams; their Images were strong and vigorous, and fix'd deeply in the Soul; and, 3dly, they were either attended with the Voices of God or Angels, speaking distinctly to them, or had some particular Instinct, always accompanying them. 2. *Voices* were frequently heard without any Appearance or Representation, and proceeded sometimes from the Clouds, from out of the Fire, out of the Whirlwind, &c. in which Cases, to judge of the Veracity of a Revelation, it was generally thought, that when the Voice was greater, than any human Voice, (as it was on the Top of the Mountain when God deliver'd the Law) or proceeded from a Place, where no human Creature was, (as in the Instance before) that it came either from God himself, or from some Messenger sent from Heaven. 3. At other Times, a Figure or Resemblance has appear'd to Persons awake, talk'd with them, and done several Things in their Company, as if it had been an human Creature; and yet the Event has shewn, that it was either God himself, or an Angel conceal'd in human Shape. And, in this Case, the Way of discerning them seems to have been, either by the Air and Majesty of their Looks, (as in the Angel that appear'd to *Manoah's* Wife) or by some miraculous Actions, that were above the Power of human Performance (as in that, which appear'd to *Gideon*). In any of these Methods of Revelation, where these several Circumstances concurr'd, it was always presum'd, that the *Dream*, or *Voice*, or *Vision*, was from God; since it is not to be suppos'd, that he, who sees and hears all Things, and himself is a Lover of Truth, wou'd ever suffer those, that love and fear him, to be impos'd upon by evil Spirits, or even perplex'd by the phantastical Operations of Nature itself. Vid. my *Body of Divinity*, Part ii. c. 3.

(x) Revelation examin'd, Vol. II. Dissertation 8.



A. M.  
2108, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1896, &c.

by a Miracle, and confirms a Covenant by Fire from Heaven, to consume the Sacrifice, which he had commanded him to offer.

AGAIN, when *Abraham* was ninety-nine Years old, God appear'd to him, and, that his Appearance was in some glorious visible Form or Figure, is sufficiently clear from the Text, which tells us, *that Abraham fell upon his Face, while God convers'd with him.* Here *Isaac* is promis'd, and *Circumcision* instituted, a painful hazardous Rite, which the Patriarch wou'd never have comply'd with, but from a full Conviction of a divine Command.

AFTER this, he appear'd unto him under the Tree of *Mamre*, in the Shape of a Pilgrim, and, by his whole Conversation with him, concerning the Fate and Iniquity of *Sodom*, discover'd himself to be God, or (to speak more properly) the *Messias* in human Shape. Soon after this, he appear'd to *Abimelech* in *Abraham's* Behalf, and inflicted a Distemper upon his whole House, which was remov'd upon *Abraham's* Prayer; and soon after this, God's Promise of an Heir was fulfill'd in the Birth of a Son from a barren Woman, which was a Proof equivalent to a thousand Miracles.

ONCE more, God commanded *Abraham* to comply with his Wife's Request, in casting out *Hagar* and her Son, though the Text implies that he lov'd them both very tenderly. This was a Command so seemingly cruel and severe, that nothing but a full Conviction of its coming from God cou'd have exacted *Abraham's* Submission to it: And now, after all these Manifestations of himself to the Patriarch, God commands him to offer up his Son *Isaac*; and will any one say, that *Abraham*, by this Time, had not sufficient Evidence that this Command was of the same Original with the rest? God had, some Way or other, appear'd, and manifested himself to him, nine Times before this Command. Twice in Vision, twice in Miracle, twice under some sensible Appearance, and thrice in some Manner, not explain'd. He had given him three prece-

ding Commands, which no Man in his Senses cou'd obey, without full Assurance that they were enjoin'd from above. He had often, before this Time, call'd to him, spoke to him, convers'd with him, and, on one Occasion, very familiarly and long; and, as we may reasonably suppose, that he always spoke with the same Voice, there is no Doubt to be made, but that he certainly knew that it was God, who spake to him upon this Occasion. For why shou'd *Abraham* suspect that God Almighty wou'd suffer an evil Spirit to delude him into the greatest and most irretrievable Calamity, acting in the Honesty and *Sincerity of his* Heart, and from a Principle of the most exalted Obedience to the divine Will? In so long a Succession of Miracles, Discourses, and Appearances, he must have acquir'd as certain and perfect a Knowledge of the *Deity*, whenever he vouchsafed to reveal himself to him, as another Man has of his *Friend*, when he hears his Voice, and converses in his Presence: And if *Abraham* was fully satisfy'd in this, his Obedience could not fail of being built upon a good Foundation.

'Tis allow'd, indeed, that there is something shocking, at first Sight, in the Idea of a Parent's taking away the Life of his own Child; but then an express Command, from a competent Authority, alters the Case, and makes that, which otherwise would be a Sin, become a Duty. It may justly be said, that he is a barbarous Parent, who commands his Children to be beat to Death with Rods before his Eyes. — This Position is undoubtedly true in the general; but does it follow from hence, that the first *Brutus* was either a bad Man, or a bad Parent, for commanding his Sons to be serv'd in this Manner, when the Duty, he ow'd to his Country, requir'd it? And did *Abraham* owe less Duty to God, than *Brutus* owed to his Country? A Captain, who should command his valiant and victorious Son to be put to Death, for exerting his Prowess upon the Enemies of his Country, must surely be a Monster among Men. This

From Gen.  
xx—xxv. 11.

That upon such  
Conviction he  
was oblig'd to  
do it.

Position,



A. M.  
2108, &c.  
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1896, &c.

Position, laid down without any Limitation, is undeniably true: But will it therefore follow, that *Manlius* was a Monster, tho' he put his own Son to Death for killing *Geminus*, General of the *Latins*, contrary to the Discipline of the War? And yet it would badly become us to say, that the Discipline of War is a stronger Obligation, than an express, positive, unerring Command, from the great Ruler of the World, the sovereign Arbiter of Life and Death.

His Reasoning  
hereupon.

So good a Man, as *Abraham* is represented, cou'd not but antecedently be satisfy'd, that a Being of infinite Wisdom and Goodness cou'd give no Command, that would *ultimately* terminate in Calamity upon Innocence and Obedience; and therefore, when a Command of an intricate and mysterious Nature was given him, what had he to do, but to obey? He knew this Son, whom God now demanded, was given him in an extraordinary Manner, and why might he not be taken away in a Manner as extraordinary? And when he was taken away, he very well knew, that God cou'd again restore him in a Manner yet more extraordinary, and that raising him from the Grave had no more Difficulty with *infinite* Power, than raising him from the Womb of a Woman, barren at first, and now, by the Course of Nature, long past the Power of Conception, which makes *St Paul's* Reflection a lively Comment upon the Principles of *Abraham's* Obedience on this Occasion: (a) *By Faith Abraham, when he was tried, offer'd up Isaac, and he, that had receiv'd the Promises, offer'd up his only begotten Son, of whom it was said, that in Isaac shall thy Seed be called, accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the Dead, from whence also he receiv'd him in a Figure.*

And why he  
made no Re-  
monstrance.

AND this, by the Bye, suggests a Reason, why the holy Patriarch, who, in other Cases, was charitable enough to intercede for the Wicked, does not so much as offer up one Petition for the Life of

his innocent Son. He had that true Sense of the Power and Veracity of God, that he was fully persuaded, that the Fate of his Child, and the Tenour of God's Promises wou'd, one Way or other, be made consistent, and therefore he left it upon his infinite Wisdom to find out the Means of unravelling this intricate Affair, without ever once murmuring, or making the least Remonstrance. But supposing that *Abraham* had taken upon him to expostulate with God upon this hard Injunction; yet, (b) what cou'd he have urged, but that the Person, whom he order'd him to slay, was his Son, his only Son, his Son whom he tenderly lov'd, and that he could not, without the greatest Force upon paternal Affection, lay violent Hands upon him: But now all Pleas of this Kind were fully anticipated by the divine Command, *Take now thy Son, thine only Son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the Land of Moriah, and offer him there for a Burnt-Offering, upon one of the Mountains, which I will tell thee of, i. e.* "notwithstanding he is thy Son, thine only Son, and a Son thou hast set thine Heart upon, yet must thou sacrifice him unto me."

IN the Case of *Sodom*, Almighty God is represented as deliberating, and undetermin'd, and there *Abraham's* Humanity, and the Rectitude of his Mind were at Liberty, nay, were engag'd to interpose; but in the Case of his own Son, God appear'd fix'd and determin'd, and there his Humility, and the Deference due to his God forbid him to expostulate. Not to say, that, if he erred in the *first* Case, he knew it was the Error of an upright, a humane, and a generous Spirit; but an Error in the *latter* would be the Effect of Partiality, and Self-interest; and *Abraham's* Heart was too honest, and too enlarged, to allow him in a Conduct, that could any way fall under the Suspicion of such mean and sordid Principles. This seems to vindicate the Conduct of *Abraham* in paying a ready Obedience to the divine Command;

(a) Heb. xi. 17, &c.

(b) Revelation examin'd, Vol. II. Dissert. 8.

From Gen  
xx—xxv. 11.



A. M.  
2108, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1896, &c.

Why God im-  
pos'd so hard a  
Command.

Command ; but then, what shall we say to the Goodness and Justice of God in imposing it ?

G O D indeed governs himself by the eternal Rules of Reason, and can give no Command in Contradiction to them ; but then common Sense tells us, that these are Rules not of *human* Reason, but *divine*, and, consequently, such Rules, as must result from the Relation, which the whole Universe, and all the Parts thereof have to one another ; an immense Compass and Variety of Things, which nothing, but infinite Wisdom can comprehend ! And therefore we take quite wrong Measures, when we estimate the Nature and Perfections of God from what we find in ourselves ; for *as the Heavens are higher than the Earth, so are his Ways higher than our Ways, and his Thoughts higher than our Thoughts.*

U P O N the Supposition however, that God really intended that *Abraham* shou'd have taken away his Son's Life, there cou'd have been no Injustice in the Injunction, since God, who is the Author and Giver of Life, has an undoubted Right to resume it, when, and in what Manner, he thinks fit, and his infinite Wisdom and Goodness secure us from all Suspicion of his taking it away *arbitrarily* or *unlawfully* : So that, had the Command been actually executed, we must have suppos'd it to have been wise, just, and good, because a divine Command necessarily implies Wisdom, and Justice, and Goodness, in the highest Degree, tho' the Reason of that Command should not appear to such limited, short-sighted Creatures, as we are.

B U T this was not the Case : God never intended that this Command should be put in Execution. His only Purpose was, to make a Trial of *Abraham's* Obedience, not to inform himself in any Thing, who was *omniscient*, and knew beforehand, both what was in *Abraham's* Heart, and how he would acquit himself in this important Juncture ; but to make him more

perfect by suffering, and his Example more conspicuous, (c) *that the Trial of his Faith* (as the Apostle words it) *being much more precious than of Gold, that perisheth, (tho' it be tried by Fire) might be found unto Praise, and Honour, and Glory ;* and that all future Generations, reading the History of his Patience and Perseverance, his Courage and Constancy, his Faith, and Hope, and Magnanimity, might glorify God in him, and look upon his Example, as a shining *Light*, which the Hand of Providence has set up in the *Firmament* of his *Church*, to guide succeeding *Saints* in the intricate and arduous Paths of their Duty.

T H O S E, who would gladly find any Flaw in our Patriarch's Character, are apt to suggest, that his desiring of God a Sign concerning the Land of *Canaan*, which had been so lately promised him, (d) (*whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it ?*) proceeded from a Defect of Faith, for which, as some pretend, he was so renown'd : But, without straining any Point to get over this Difficulty, we may fairly own, that *Abraham* is here doing no more, than what many *Worthies* of old are known to have done after him, when they were put upon any difficult Services ; namely, requesting of God some outward Token or Representation, to strengthen and confirm his Faith concerning the divine Promises, which is an Argument of Modesty, not of any Diffidence in the divine Veracity ; and therefore the Words are very properly paraphras'd, by *St Chrysostom* : “ I “ firmly believe, that, what thou hast “ promis'd, shall come to pass, and there- “ fore I ask no Questions out of Distrust ; “ but I shall be glad to be favour'd with “ some such special Token, or Anticipa- “ tion of it, as may strongly affect my “ Senses, and raise my poor weak Ideas “ and Imaginations about it.”

T H O S E, that are dispos'd to find Faults, are always provided with an Handle ; o- therwise, one would wonder, that *Abra-* ham's making *Groves* the constant Place

From Gen.  
xx—xxv. 11.

The Meaning  
of Abraham's  
requesting a  
Sign.

His Practice  
gave no Oc-  
casion to Ido-  
latry.

of

(c) 1 Pet. i. 7.

(d) Gen. xv. 8.



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of divine Worship, shou'd be ever brought as an Accusation against him, merely because, in After-Ages, they came to be perverted into Scenes of the grossest Superstition and Idolatry ; or that, because his Intention to offer up his Son gave Umbrage to human Sacrifices afterwards, he should be thought chargeable with the Event. The Groves of *Moreh* and *Mamre*, which were the principal ones, that he planted, were (*e*) (as we hinted before) certain *Oratories*, or Sanctuaries, expos'd to the open Air, (*f*) but planted with Trees, for the Benefit of their Shade, and for the more solemn Composure of the Mind, and Recollection of the Thoughts for heavenly Contemplation. Before the Institution of more commodious Receptacles for divine Worship, these, and such like Places were usually frequented for that Purpose ; and therefore they had sometimes the Name given them of *the Houses of God*, *the Courts of God*, and their Trees, were call'd the *Trees of God*. In these Places it was that *Abraham* offer'd up his Morning and Evening Sacrifice with Acceptance ; and if, in After-Ages, they came to be applied to abominable Purposes, he is no more to be blam'd for that Abuse, than *Moses* was for setting up a *Brazen-Serpent* in the Wilderness, which was afterwards perverted to Idolatry, tho', in its *primary* Intendment, it was *sanative* and *medicinal*.

AND, in like Manner, if the Custom of sacrificing Children took its Origin from some *Tradition* founded on the History of *Isaac's* being offer'd, wherein, I pray, is either *Abraham* to be blam'd, or God, for appointing him to this Office ; since, whether the Custom was *prior*, or *subsequent*, to this Transaction, God has herein taken an effectual Care to discountenance it ?

(*g*) FOR if, as some imagine, this impious and abominable Rite obtain'd at this Time ; 'tis evident, that nothing cou'd be better calculated to abolish it, than this Command to *Abraham*, which was a plain

Document to the whole World, that *human* Sacrifices were not acceptable to God : From Gen. XX—XXV. 11.

For, if they could be acceptable from any Hand, they must certainly have been so from *his*, who, of all Men in the World, stood highest in the Favour of Almighty God. And therefore, when it appears, in the Event, and this Command was only in Trial of Obedience, and that, when it came to the Point of Execution, *Abraham* was expressly forbid to execute it by a Voice from Heaven, and, (to shew God's Aversion to human Sacrifices) by his Appointment, a Brute-Animal was substituted in the Place of *Isaac* ; when all this is consider'd, I say, we can hardly think of a clearer Monition to Mankind upon this Head, than God's own Prohibition of that Practice by Command from Heaven, and a miraculous Interposition of a *vicarious* Oblation.

ON the other Hand, if this impious Custom had not yet obtained, but God, in his great Knowledge, foresaw that Superstition would soon introduce it ; what could be a more effectual Means, either to prevent, or repress it, than the Attestation of all *Abraham's* dispersed Servants and Descendants, vouching every where with one Voice, that God himself had prohibited their Master from practising it. And 'tis not improbable (from the Fable of the Goddess *Diana's* substituting a Deer in the Room of *Iphigenia*, who was to be offer'd) that the Memory of God's prohibiting all human Sacrifices was handed down to late Posterity.

THUS we have endeavour'd to vindicate some Passages in *Abraham's* Life, which seem'd most liable to Exception ; and come now to enquire into the obnoxious Part of the Conduct of his Nephew *Lot*.

(*b*) IT is not to be doubted, but that *Lot*, who, by the Assistance of his Uncle *Abraham*, had done such signal Services to the *Sodomites*, was, by this Time, become a Person of some Eminence among them ;

How far  
Lot, and his  
Daughters  
were to blame.

(*e*) Vid. Page 215, in the Notes.  
Examind, Vol. II. Dissertation 8.

(*f*) *Bibliotheca Bibl.* Vol. I. Occas. Annot. 20.  
(*b*) *Bibliotheca Bibl.* Vol. I. Occas. Annot. 21.

(*g*) Revelation



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them ; had probably married a Woman of a principal Family ; and was admitted into some considerable Post of Honour and Authority. The *Jewish* Doctors will needs persuade us, that he was now one of the Judges in *Sodom*, and, as such, *sat at the Gate of the City*, where the Courts of Judicature were usually held. His *sitting at the Gate* however seems rather to have been (according to the Hospitality of those Days) with an Intent to invite Strangers into his House, the better to secure them from the libidinous Outrage of his Neighbours.

Two Strangers, (who afterwards prov'd two Angels) he had now under his Roof, when the Inhabitants, from all Parts of the City, flocking together, storm'd the House, and demanded the two Strangers to be brought out to them, that they might abuse their Bodies : Whereupon *Lot*, deeply concern'd, lest the Right of Hospitality shou'd be violated, is resolv'd to expose both himself, and *his*, to the utmost Peril, rather than those, whom he had taken under his Protection, shou'd come to any Harm. Upon this Principle he ventures out of Doors alone among this lewd licentious Rabble, that he might calmly expostulate the Matter with some of the Chief of them, and divert them, if possible, from the Violence, they intended against his Guests.

THE Offer, which he made them upon this Occasion, *viz.* to give up his two Daughters to their Lust, seems to be a strange one ; but then we are to consider, that, as it was made in the utmost Perplexity of Mind, and out of a vehement Desire to secure his Guests ; so may it, after all, imply no more than this,—  
“ God forbid, my Friends, that you should  
“ make yourselves guilty of a Crime of so  
“ high a Nature, as to offer the least In-

“ dignity to these noble Strangers, whom <sup>From Gen. xx—xxv. 11.</sup>  
“ I have receiv'd into my House, and  
“ whom I therefore cannot put in your  
“ Power upon any Terms whatever.  
“ Much rather had I part even with my  
“ own dear Daughters, who are in my  
“ Power, and who are also marriageable,  
“ than with these, whom I am not autho-  
“ riz'd to dispose of. Wherefore, I be-  
“ seech you, Brethren, deal not so fool-  
“ ishly in this Matter, but consider what  
“ ye are now going to do ; and since, of  
“ two Evils, 'tis better to commit the less  
“ than the greater, are there not Women  
“ among you, whom ye may chuse for the  
“ satisfying the Desires of your Flesh, and  
“ not sin against the Order of Nature ? But  
“ if there are none found, that can please  
“ you, and you will nevertheless persist, I  
“ protest to you, Sirs, I will sooner lose my  
“ own Children, with all that I have in the  
“ World, than even once consent to de-  
“ part from my Word, which I have gi-  
“ ven to these worthy Persons. There-  
“ fore do as you please with me, and  
“ mine, seeing that I am in your Hand ;  
“ only touch not *these* \*.” This seems to be, in a great Measure, the Purport of *Lot's* Proposal to the Men of *Sodom* ; and yet, with all this Mollification, it has not unjustly incurr'd the Censure of (i) *St Austin*. *We must not consider*, says he, *the Offer, which Lot made to the Inhabitants of Sodom, as proceeding from a wise, sober, and a premeditated Design, but rather as a Speech, which dropp'd from a Man, struck with Horror at the Thoughts of the abominable Sin, they were going to commit, and who, by the Surprise and Trouble, that he was in, had lost the Use of his Reason and Discretion. For, if once we lay it down for a Rule, that there may be a Compensation of Sin (as he calls it)*

\* *Le Clerc*, in his Commentaries upon the Place, assigns another Reason, why *Lot* might, with better Courage, make an Offer of his Daughters to the *Sodomites*. For, supposing him to be a considerable Man in the City, and his Daughters both betroth'd (as we find they were betroth'd, *Gen. xix. 14*) to two young Gentlemen of Eminence, he might safely propose the Thing, as knowing very well, that they neither *durst*, nor *would* accept of it. That they *durst not*, for Fear of Punishment from Persons of their Rank and Authority ; and that they *would not*, because Brothers in Iniquity (however outrageous they may be against others) affect always to maintain some Form of Decency between themselves. But it is hard to say, what Persons of their Complexion would either have been *afraid* or *asham'd* to do, had the Bent of their Inclination tended that Way.

(i) In *Gen. Tom. 4. Quest. 46. & contra Mendacium, c. 9. & c. 7.*



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it) *i. e.* that we may commit less Sins, in order to prevent others from running into greater, we shall, in a short Time, lay waste all Bounds, and see every Manner of Wickedness come rushing in upon us without Controul.

AFTER the Destruction of Sodom, and Lot's Departure from Zoar, he retired, we are told, into a Cave, where his two Daughters betrayed him into the double Sin of Drunkenness and Incest; and, with what Design they did it, (k) the Authors, who would fain apologize for their Conduct, do generally run into this Strain, *viz.* that these two Maids, having some Notions of a general Conflagration of the World, and seeing their own City and Country consumed by Fire, were fully persuaded, that the divine Indignation, which had consumed the Sodomites, had fallen over the Face of the whole Earth, and that their Father was the only Man left, from whose Body Mankind was to be repropagated. They were young, and unexperienced, *say they*, and might therefore very well be ignorant, that several Parts of the Earth were inhabited, as well as the Plain of Sodom had been. As far as their Eye would reach, they saw nothing, but sulphureous Flames, and a wide Theatre of Perdition; and this they look'd upon as the final Catastrophe, which, as they had been told, was to put a Period to Nature. They had unaccountably lost their Mother too; so that they concluded, that they, and their Father, were the only Survivors of human Nature, (as Noah and his Family had been after the Flood) and that therefore 'twas their Duty to take Care to prevent the Extinction of the Species. And, tho' they knew it to be a very grievous Sin in itself, to betray their own Father into a carnal Knowledge of themselves; yet they thought they shou'd be more inexcusable, if they should rate the Chastness of their Bodies so high, as not to part with it, rather than Mankind should be no more.

BUT all this is no more than a plausible Fiction, without any Foundation to support it. They had lately left Zoar, and knew that it was well inhabited; and were therefore convinc'd, that they and their Father were not the only three Persons left alive in the World: But this they knew very well, (l) that there was not so much as one of all their Kindred left, by whom they could raise up Seed or Successors to their Father; those, of their Father's Side, being at a vast Distance from them; and those, of their Mother's, every one destroyed in the Conflagration of Sodom.

Now it was at that Time an universal Law, which became afterwards a particular one of the Jews, that Marriages shou'd be contracted within the Family, to preserve Inheritances, and to avoid the Mixture of Seeds: So that the two Sisters here argu'd very justly upon the Principles then universally admitted, *i. e.* upon the general Law of Nations. For, seeing they had no Brother to keep up their Name and Family, and their Father had lost their Mother, by whom he might have had other Children, and they themselves, their Husbands, before Consummation, in the common Destruction; there was no apparent Possibility of preserving their Father's Family from utter Extinction after their three Lives, or of averting the said *Curse of Excision*, but by the very Method, which, at last, they concerted between them. So that they had the Plea of Necessity on their Sides to excuse, if not to justify them: And, that they were not led by any Spirit of Uncleaness to this Action, we have these Presumptions to believe: — That, in the Midst of all the Impurities of the most wicked City under Heaven, they had preserv'd their Innocence and Virginit; that they unanimously joined together in the same Contrivance, whereas vicious Intrigues are seldom communicated, and, whenever they are, always occasion Quarrels; that, what they did once they never

From Gen.  
XX—XXV. 11.

(k) Origen's Hom. 5. p. 15. col. 2. St Ambrose de Abrahamâ, l. 1. and St Chrysostom's Hom. in Locum. (l) Bibliotheca Bib. Vol. 1. Occas. Annot. 23.



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never repeated, and so cannot be suspected of having been incited by brutal Lust; and, lastly, that they were so far from being conscious to themselves of having acted upon any base and sinful Inducement, that, in the Names of their Children, they took Care to perpetuate the Memory of it to Posterity; which they never would have done, had they thought it a Reproach to their Father's Name.

THEIR Father too, in the Matter of Incest, may in some Measure be excus'd, for as much as he offer'd no Violence to his Daughters, but was altogether passive, and impos'd upon by them; but then, it must be consider'd, that had he not allow'd himself to drink to Excess, it had not been in the Power of his Daughters to deceive him. The Daughters indeed, without this Expedient, cou'd not have attain'd their End; but then the Unjustifiableness of the Means discredits the End, even tho' it were good and laudable before. The short is, both Father and Daughters, in this whole Transaction, were not without Sin: And therefore whatever may be said in Mitigation of their Faults, we mistake the Matter widely, if we think that the sacred History, in barely relating them, means either to approve or commend them.

Melchisedeck's Character explained, and justified.

It cannot be denied indeed, but that sundry Difficulties occur in the Character of *Melchisedeck*, as he is describ'd in the Holy Scriptures; but there is certainly no Incongruity in his being both King and Priest in one Person. For, if we cast our Eye into any ancient Writer, we shall find that, before the Institution of a separate Order of Men, the *regal* and *sacerdotal* Offices both went together; and that he, who was appointed to govern the Affairs of State, had always a Right to *minister about holy Things*. This is an Observation, that the Writings of *Homer* will verify in almost innumerable Instances; but (to mention but one, out of each of his Poems) after *Agamemnon* was constituted

the Head of the *Grecian* Army, (m) we find him every where, in the publick Sacrifices, performing the Priest's Office, and the other *Grecian* Kings and Heroes bearing their Parts under him in the Administration: And (n) when *Nestor* made a Sacrifice to *Minerva*, *Stratius* and the noble *Ecepheron* led the Bull to the Altar; *Aretus* brought the Water, and Canisters of Corn; *Perseus* brought the Vessel to receive the Blood; *Thrasimedes*, Son of *Nestor*, knock'd down the Ox; but *Nestor* himself acted as Priest, and perform'd the rest of the Ceremony.

If we look into some of the best Historians, we shall find this Point more confirm'd. For, among the *Lacedemonians*, whenever they went to Battle, the King, according to (o) *Plutarch*, always perform'd the Sacrifice; and, in the Army (as *Xenophon* (p) informs us) his chief Business was, to have the supreme Command of the Forces, and to be their Priest in the Offices of Religion. In the Time of the Heroes, says *Aristotle*, (q) the Custom was, for one and the same Person to be General of the Forces, Judge, and High-Priest, according to that known Verse in (r) *Virgil*,

*Rex Anius, rex idem hominum, Phœbi-  
que sacerdos.*

So that, in short, from any Thing that appears in the History, we have no Reason to think, that, until some Ages after *Homer*, Mankind had any other publick Ministers in Religion, but those who were the Kings, and Governors of the State.

THERE were indeed, in ancient Times, many little Islands, and small Tracts of Land, where Civil Government was not set up in Form; but the Inhabitants liv'd together in Peace and Quiet, under the Direction of some eminent Person, who rul'd them by wise Admonitions, and by instructing them in the great Principles of Religion; and the Governors of these Countries

(m) *Iliad* 3. *Iliad* 8. & in aliis locis.  
Lacedem.

(q) *Polit.* I. 1.

(n) *Odyss.* 5.  
(r) *Æneid.* iii. ver. 80.

(o) In *Lycurgo*.

(p) *De Repub.*



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Countries affected \* to be called *Priests* rather than *Kings*. But, if at any Time they, and their People came to form a *political* Society, upon more express Terms and Conditions; then we find these Sort of Persons call'd both *Priests* and *Kings*. These small States indeed cou'd have but little Power to support themselves against the Encroachment of their Neighbours. Their Religion was their greatest Strength: And therefore it was their happiest Circumstance, that their Kings or Governors were reputed sacred by their Neighbours, and so highly favour'd by God for their great and singular Piety, that it was thought a dangerous Thing to violate their Rights, or injure the People under their Protection.

SUCH a King as this was the great *Melchisedeck*, who came out to gratulate the Patriarch *Abraham*: And 'tis no bad Conjecture of some, that he was called the King of *Salem*, not so much upon Account of *Salem's* being the proper Name of any determinate Place, the Seat of his Dominion; as that, in general, it signified *Peace*, and that therefore *Melchisedeck* was the King of Peace, or the *peaceable King*; because the Sacredness of his Character secur'd him from being invaded by his Neighbours, and his wise Administration kept all Things in good Order, so that he was never molested by his Subjects.

THIS however is no more than a Conjecture, because it is certain, that there were two Places in *Palestine*, which went under that Name; the one, the same with that, which was afterwards called *Jerusalem*, and the other, a Town lying upon the Banks of the River *Jordan*, not far from the Place, (s) where *John* (our Saviour's Forerunner) is said to have baptiz'd. Here formerly were seen the Ruins of the Palace of this *Melchisedeck*, which, in the Time of *St Jerom*, (as he tells us) discover'd the Magnificence of it's Structure:

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and, upon that Father's Authority, several modern Authors have gone into the Opinion, that this Place was the Metropolis of that Prince. But since that City, even according to the Testimony of the same *St Jerom*, was quite demolish'd by *Abimelech*, 'tis hardly conceivable, how such remarkable Remains should be of so long Continuance, and yet escape the Observation of *Josephus*, who was no undiligent Enquirer into the Antiquities of the *Jewish* Nation, and yet his express Declaration is, - That *Melchisedeck* (t) was King of *Solyma*, which is now called *Jerusalem*.

It is the much more probable Opinion therefore, (u) that this Palace was built by *Jeroboam*, when he repair'd *Salem*, and that the Inhabitants (possibly the *Samaritans*) in After-ages, either devised, or promoted a false Tradition, that it originally belong'd to *Melchisedeck*. For the general Consent of the Antients give it clearly for *Jerusalem*, as duly considering, that *Abraham's* Rout, in returning from the Territories of *Damascus* to *Hebron*, was directly through its Coasts, (whereas the other *Salem* lay devious, to the North) and that there was a Kind of Propriety in the Mystery, and what the Analogy of the Thing seem'd to require, that *Melchisedeck* should be King of that very Place, in which the true Prince of Peace, (whereof he was a Type and Representation) was, in future Ages, to make his Appearance.

WHO this *Melchisedeck* was, is still an hard Question, that has puzzled most Interpreters. The Author to the *Hebrews* indeed has recorded a Description of him; but this is so far from giving us any Light, that it has, in a great measure, been the Occasion of leading some into a Persuasion, (x) that the Person, here call'd *Melchisedeck*, was an Angel; others, that he was the Son of God; and others, the Holy Ghost, in the Shape and Appearance of

M m m m

Man;

From Gen.  
xx—xxv. 11.

\* Thus *Jethro* is called by *Moses*, not the King, but the Priest of *Midian*; and thus *Chryses*, the Priest of *Apollo* at *Chrysa*, and not the King of *Chrysa*, tho' both he and *Jethro* were the Governors of the Countries, where they liv'd. *Shuckford's Connection*, Vol. II. l. 6.

(s) John iii. 22.

(t) Antiq. l. i. c. 11.

(u) *Heidegger's Hist. Patriarch*. Vol. I. Exercit. 2.

(x) Vid. *Galmet's* and *Saurin's* Dissert. sur *Melchisedeck*. *Heidegger's Hist. Patriarch*. Vol. II.



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Man; because they cannot conceive how the Qualities, ascrib'd to this excellent Personage, can comport with any human Creature. The Phrase however made use of by the Apostle, ἀγενεαλόγητος *without Descent*, or *without Genealogy*, explains what the Apostle means by, *without Father, and without Mother*, i. e. \* without any Father or Mother, mention'd in the Genealogies of *Moses*, where the Parents of all pious *Worthies* are generally set down with great Exactness: (y) So that there being no Genealogy at all of *Melchisedeck* recorded in Scripture, he is introduc'd at once; even like *a Man dropp'd down from Heaven*, for so the Description goes on, *having neither Beginning of Days, nor End of Life*, i. e. in the History of *Moses*, which (contrary to its common Usage, when it makes mention of great Men) takes no Notice at all of the Time, either of his Birth, or Death, and herein *he is made like unto the Son of God*, i. e. by the History of *Moses*, which mentions him appearing, and acting upon the Stage, without either *Entrance* or *Exit*, as if, like the *Son of God*, he had *abode a Priest continually*.

THIS is the common, and † the best

approv'd Interpretation of the Apostle's Words; but still the Question returns upon us, to whom can this *Character*, even with this *Comment*, belong?

THE *Jews* are generally of Opinion, and herein are follow'd by some *Christians*, that *Melchisedeck* was the same with *Shem*, one of the Sons of *Noah*, whom they suppose alive in the Days of *Abraham*, the only Person upon Earth, *say they*, who cou'd, with Justice, be called his *Superior*, and whom the Description of the Apostle cou'd, in any tolerable Manner, besit, as being a Person of many Singularities, born before the Deluge, having no Ancestors then alive, and whose Life had been of an immense Duration, in Comparison of those, who came after him. But, not to dispute the Fact, whether *Shem* was, at that Time, alive or no, (z) it seems very incongruous to think, that *Moses*, who all along mentions him in his proper Name, shou'd, upon this Occasion, disguise his Sense with a fictitious one; and very incompatible it is with what we knew of *Shem*, that he shou'd be said to be *without Father*, and *without Mother*, when his Family is so plainly recorded in Scripture, and all his Progenitors may, in a Moment,

From Gen. xx—xxv. 11.

Who this Melchisedeck was not.

\* From the Times of *Epiphanius* there were Names invented for the Father and Mother of *Melchisedeck*. To his Father was given the Name of *Heraclas*, or *Heracles*; and to his Mother, that of *Astaroth*, or *Astaria*. *Calmet's Dictionary*.

(y) *Scott's Christian Life*, Part ii. c. 7.

† The learned *Heidegger*, in my Opinion, has taken the right Method to explain this difficult Passage of *St Paul* to the *Hebrews*. He supposes, (as there really is) a two-fold *Melchisedeck*, the one *historical*, whereof *Moses* gives us an Account in the xivth Chapter of *Genesis*, as that he was the King, as well as Priest of *Jerusalem*; the other *allegorical*, whom *St Paul* describes in the Words now under Consideration, and this allegorical Person is *Christ*. The Word *Melchisedeck*, simply consider'd, means the *King of Righteousness*; and, from this Sense of the Word, in its appellative Acceptation, and the Remembrance of this Person's being a *Priest*, as well as a King, the Apostle took Occasion to draw the Comparison between him and *Christ*, in order to shew the Pre-eminence of the *Christian*, above the *Aaronical* Priesthood; and what he ascribes to the historical *Melchisedeck*, upon this Account, is only to be understood in an *imperfect* and improper Sense, that is, really and literally true only in the Person of *Christ*. The Apostle was minded, in short, to illustrate his Argument with some Comparison; and, writing at this Time to the *Jews* (who were well acquainted with this *allegorical* Way of arguing) he cou'd meet with none, in the whole Compass of their Law, so commodious for his Purpose, as this of *Melchisedeck*: and therefore as *Christ*, the heavenly *Melchisedeck*, was *without Father, without Mother, without Descent* here on Earth, in respect of his Divinity, *having neither Beginning of Days, nor End of Life*; so the like Properties may, in some measure, be applied to the earthly *Melchisedeck*. Forasmuch as, in the Book of *Genesis*, wherein all great Mens Genealogies are suppos'd to be recorded, there is no Mention made, either of his Birth, Family, or Death; only he was invested with a Royal Priesthood, which assimilates him to *Christ*. He had a Father and Mother, no doubt, and was born, and died, like other Men; but, because these Things are not related by *Moses*, the Apostle looks upon them, as tho' they had never been. So that the whole Hinge of the Comparison turns upon the Silence of the sacred Historian, who, in a Book (wherein it might be expected otherwise) makes no manner of Mention, either of the Beginning or Ending of *Melchisedeck's* Life or Priesthood: And 'tis for this Reason, that he, who wrote by the Guidance of the blessed Spirit, was directed to conceal these Matters; that, in this Situation, this same *Melchisedeck* might be a more proper Type of so sublime a Thing, as that of the Priesthood of *Jesus Christ*. *Hist. Patriar. Vol. II. Exercit. 2.*

(z) *Bochart's Phaleg*. l. 2. c. 1.



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Moment, be trac'd to their Fountain-Head in *Adam*. Besides, had *Melchisedeck* and *Shem* been the same Person, the Apostle wou'd hardly have made him of a Family different to *Abraham*, much less wou'd he have set him in such an Eminence above the *Patriarch*, or thereupon broke out into this Exclamation concerning him; *Consider how great this Man was, unto whom even the Patriarch Abraham gave the Tenth of the Spoils!*

THESE Arguments seem to evince that *Melchisedeck* and *Shem* were different Persons; and much more Reason have we to suppose, that he and *Ham*, that wicked Son of *Noah*, were so. For who, upon deliberate Thoughts, can believe, that this curst Person was the *Priest of the most high God*, from whom *Abraham* so joyfully receiv'd the sacerdotal Benediction, that he returned it with the Payment of his *Tithes*? And much less can we believe, that one of his ill Character was the *Type* of the blessed *Jesus*. *Jesus* indeed himself, if he be taken for *Melchisedeck*, appearing to *Abraham* in an human Shape, (as he is often suppos'd to do in Scripture) will answer all the Character, which the Apostle gives of this extraordinary Person: But then the Wonder is, that the Historian shou'd never give us the least Intimation of this;

that *Abraham* shou'd express no Manner of Surprise upon such an Interview; and (what is more) how the *Type* and the *Anti-type* can possibly be represented the same. (a) For this is the Case: Here *Melchisedeck* was a Representative of our Saviour, according to that of the Apostle, *Jesus was a Priest after the Order of Melchisedeck*, which he explains in another Place, *after the Similitude of Melchisedeck, there ariseth another Priest*; as much as to say, *Melchisedeck* and *Christ* were like one another in several Things, and thereupon one was design'd to be a fit *Type* of the other: But as it is unreasonable and absurd to say, that a Person is like himself, so we cannot rationally imagine, that *Christ*, who, as *St Paul* says, was *after the Similitude of Melchisedeck*, was, in reality, the same Person with him.

THUS we have look'd into \* some of the chief Conjectures concerning this great Man, which seem to have any Plausibility in them; and, after all, must content ourselves with what the Scriptures nakedly report of him, viz. That this *Melchisedeck* was both a King and a Priest (for these two Offices were antiently united) in the Land of *Palestine*, in the City of *Jerusalem*, descended, not improbably, \* from wicked and idolatrous Parents, but himself

(a) *Edwards's Survey of Religion, Vol. I.*

\* The sole Question concerning the Person of *Melchisedeck*, would supply Matter for a whole Volume, even tho' one shou'd do no more than recite the Catalogue of the different Opinions, to which it has given Rise, and the Reason, upon which each Conjecturer has endeavour'd to establish his own. The *Melchisedeckians*, a Sect in the early Times of the Church, maintain'd, that he was a certain divine Power superior to *Christ*: *Hieraxes the Egyptian*, that he was the Holy Ghost, because compar'd to the Son of God: The *Samaritans*, and many *Jews*, that he was *Shem*, the Son of *Noah*. Mr *Jurieu* [in his *Hist. Critique des Dogmes, &c.* l. 1.] of late, that he was *Ham*, another Son of his: *Origen*, that he was an Angel: *Athanasius*, that he was the Son of *Melchi*, the Grandson of *Salaad*: *Patricides*, that he was the Son of *Phaleg*: *Irenaeus*, that he was King of *Jerusalem*: *St Jerom*, that he was the King of *Salem*, in *Scythopolis*; and a certain anonymous Author, that he was a Man immediately created by God, as was *Adam*: And because he is said to have had no Relations, some have given out, that the Earth open'd her Mouth, and swallow'd them all up; whilst others, because he is said to have had no End of Life, suppose that he was translated, and is now with *Enoch* and *Elias*, in a State of Paradise. *Heidegger's Hist. Patriar. Vol. II. Exerc. 2.* But all these Opinions are at present reduc'd to these two, whether this *Melchisedeck* was a meer mortal Man, or the Son of God in human Shape, which the Reader may find supported with Arguments on both Sides, in both *Saurin's* and *Calmet's* Dissertations upon this Subject.

\* Those, who make him to be the Son of *Melchi*, an idolatrous King, and of a Queen nam'd *Salem*, have an antient Tradition, that *Melchi* having resolv'd to offer a Sacrifice to his Gods, sent his Son *Melchisedeck* to fetch him seven Calves, that he might sacrifice them; but that, as he was going, he was enlighten'd by God, and immediately return'd to his Father to remonstrate to him the Vanity of Idols. His Father in Wrath sent him back to fetch the Victims, and while he was gone, offer'd up to his Gods his own Son, who was the elder Brother of *Melchisedeck*, with a great Number of other Children. *Melchisedeck* returning, and conceiving a great Horror at this Butchery, retir'd to Mount *Tabor*, where he liv'd for seven Years without Clothes, and without any other Food, but wild Fruits, or any other Drink, but the Dew, that he suck'd up from the Plants; till, at length, *Abraham*, by the Direction of God,

From Gen.  
xx—xxv. 11.



A. M.  
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himself a Person of singular Virtue and Piety, the *Priest of the most high God*, but perhaps the first, and the last of his Race, who was so, which might give Occasion to the *Apostle* to describe him under such ambiguous Terms; for the whole of these (according to the Judgment of a learned Author) \* may not improperly be reduc'd to this single Proposition, (b) *that Melchisedeck was the most illustrious of his Family, and had neither Predecessor, nor Successor in his Employ.*

The Prophecy  
concerning  
Ishmael ex-  
plain'd, and  
justify'd.

WE readily grant indeed, that there is something very strange and uncommon in the Prophecy relating to *Ishmael*; but the Question is not concerning the *Singularity*, but the *Reality* rather of the Matters contained in it. If these are explicable in themselves; and, upon Examination, found to be true, then is the Prophecy so far from losing its *Credit* upon the Account of its Strangeness, that, for this very Reason, it demonstrates its *divine Origin*; because nothing, but an omniscient Mind, could foresee Things so strange and unaccountable; and nothing but an Almighty Power and Providence could bring these Things to pass, and make the Event exactly agree with the Prediction.

Now, in order to explain the Prophecy itself, and thence to observe how perfectly it has all along been fulfill'd, it must be remember'd, that, (according to the known

Stile of the *Old Testament*) what is here said of *Ishmael*, must be chiefly understood of his Descendants, in the same Manner (c) as what *Jacob* predicts of *Judah*, and the rest of his Sons, was to relate to their Posterity, and be indeed the Characteristick of their several Tribes. And therefore (to take Notice of two of the most odd and unaccountable Branches of his Character) *he will be a wild Man*, or a Man like a *wild Ass*; this (from the known Properties of that Creature) several Interpreters have resolv'd into these Qualities, — *Fierce, and cruel, loving Solitude, and hating Confinement of any Kind.*

How far this Part of the Character was verify'd in *Ishmael*, who liv'd in the Wilderness, and became an expert *Archer*, his very Condition of Life shews us; and how properly it belongs to his Posterity, the *Arabians*, who, in every Nation, have very justly obtained the Appellation of *wild*, a small Inspection into History will inform us.

To this very Day (as (d) *modern Travellers* do inform us) great Numbers of them live in the Desarts, and wander about from Place to Place, without any certain Habitation. They neither plow the Ground, nor apply themselves to any Kind of Husbandry, tho' there are several fruitful Places in the Wilderness, that would repay their Pains. Their whole Occupation

God, went up to the Mount, found out *Melchisedeck*, clothed him, and brought him down with him. But those, who wou'd have him be the Son of *Phaleg*, relate a still stranger Story, viz. That *Noah*, upon his Death-Bed, charged his Son *Seth* to take *Melchisedeck*, the Son of *Phaleg*, with him, and go to a Place, which the Angel of the Lord shou'd shew them, and there bury the Body of *Adam*, which he had preserv'd in the Ark during the Flood; that in that Place *Melchisedeck* should fix his Habitation, lead a single Life, and entirely addict himself to the Practice of Piety, because God had made Choice of him for his *Priest*, but allow'd him not to shed the Blood of any Animal, nor to offer any other Oblation to him, but that of Bread and Wine only; that *Seth* and *Melchisedeck* did as *Noah* had enjoin'd them, and buried *Adam* in the Place, which the Angel pointed out; that, upon their parting, *Melchisedeck* betook himself to the monastick Course of Life, which *Noah* had prescrib'd him; but that twelve neighbouring Kings, hearing of his Fame, and desirous of his Acquaintance, consulted together, and built a City, whereof they constituted him King and Governor, and, in Honour to his Merit, call it *Jerusalem*. Vid. *Selden de Jure Nat.* 1. 3. c. 2. and *Heidegger's Hist. Patriar.* Vol. II. Exercit. 7.

\* The same learned Author, who makes the *Melchisedeck* spoken of in Scripture, in one Sense to be *historical*, and in another *allegorical*, defines the *Historical* in these Words, — *Verus, & merus homo, ex Adamo & Noacho, per ejus Filium Chamum, & nepotem Cananaum, satus, Hierosolymæ Rex, veri Dei sacerdos, gratiâ communi omnibus fidelibus regeneratus & sanctificatus, atque ad beatum Resurrectionem, & vitam æternam obsequatus.* And the *Allegorical* in these of *St Paul*, — *Qui est Rex Justitiæ & Pacis, sine Patre, sine Matre, sine Genealogiâ, sacerdos in perpetuum, & habens testimonium quod vivat.* Quæ omnia, ut jam annuimus, sibi be, conveniunt *Melchisedeco*, in sensu minutiore, & allegorico, & (ut patres amant loqui) κατ' οἰκονομίαν; Christo autem in Emphasi, & rei veritate. *Historia Patriar.* Vol. II. Exercit. 2.

(b) *Outram de Sacrificiis.*

(c) *Gen. xlix.*

(d) Vid. *Rauwolf's Travels*, Part ii. c. 3.



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tion (beside spoiling their Neighbours) lies in hunting, and killing wild Beasts, in which there are but few, that make use of Fire-Arms: The much greater Part of them make use of the *Bow*, and do herein imitate their great Progenitor, that they are the most exquisite *Archers* in the World.

BEFORE the Introduction of *Mahometanism*, they were as *vagrant* in their Lust, and as little restrain'd in the Use of Females, as the brutal Herd: And, even now, they take as many Wives, as do the *Turks*, i. e. as many as they can keep, whom they purchase of their Parents, use with Indifference, and dismiss at Pleasure. They rove about like the fiercest Beasts of Prey, seeking continually whom they may devour; insomuch, that the Governor of *Grand Cairo* is forced to keep a Guard of four thousand Horsemen every Night, on the Side of the City next the Wilderness, to secure it against their Incursions. Nor is the Wilderness only the Scene of their Depredations: They rove all over the *Southern* and *Eastern* Seas, visit every Creek, and Coast, and Island, and (as the (e) Historian compares them) come *souping* like an *Hawk*, with incredible Swift-ness, upon their Prey, and are gone again in an Instant. And, as they have always thus prey'd upon Mankind, the necessary Consequence is, that they have always been at Variance and Hostility with them; and therein have made good the other Branch of *Ismael's* Character, *His Hand shall be against every Man, and every Man's Hand against him*.

THERE is not the least Hint in Scripture, nor any Manner of Reason to believe, that *Ismael* dwelt in a *personal* State of Hostility with his Brethren, nor is it conceivable, how he cou'd have maintain'd himself against their united Forces, had he so done; and therefore, this Prediction can no otherwise be understood, than as it relates to his Posterity, the *Arabians*. Now, that any one Nation should be of so singular and perverse a Character, as to set them-

selves in open Opposition to the rest of the World, and live in perpetual, profess'd Enmity with all Mankind; and that they shou'd continue to do so, not for one Age or two only, but for four thousand Years together, is surely the strangest and most astonishing Prediction, that ever was read or heard of. And yet, if we attend a little to the History of these People (as soon as History takes notice of them) we shall find, in several Instances, a full Accomplishment of it.

WHEN *Alexander*, and his victorious Army over-ran a great Part of the *East*, the *Arabians* (as we are told by *Arrian*, and *Strabo*) of all the *Asiatics*, were the only People, who sent him no Ambassador, nor made any Submission to him; which Indignity he intended to have reveng'd in a particular Expedition against them, but was prevented by Death.

(f) WHAT *Alexander* intended, *Antigonus*, the greatest of his Successors, attempted; but he was repuls'd with Disgrace, and the Loss of above 8000 Men: And when, enrag'd at this Repulse, he made a second Attempt upon them with a Number of select Men, under the Command of his valiant Son *Demetrius*, the Resistance, he met with, was so obstinate, that he was forced to compound the Matter, and leave them in the quiet Possession of their Liberty and Peace.

WHEN the *Romans* and *Parthians* were Rivals for the Empire of the *East*, the *Arabians* join'd, and oppos'd each Nation, as they thought fit, but were never entirely devoted to either; for their Character always was, that they were *fickle*, if not *faithless* Friends, and *fierce* Enemies, who might be repuls'd, and repress'd for a Season, but could never be totally vanquish'd, or subdu'd.

MEN of this Character soon became the Objects of the *Roman* Enmity and Ambition, which could endure nothing that was free and independant; and accordingly several Attempts were set on Foot by *Pompey*, *Craffius*, and other great

N n n n

Generals,

(e) *Ammianus Marcellinus*.

(f) Vid. Dr Jackson on the Creed.

From Gen.  
xx—xxv. 11.



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2108, &c.  
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*Generals*, in order to enslave them ; but all prov'd successless : And, tho' they are sometimes said to have been defeated, yet is there no Account, that we can properly depend on, until we come to the Expedition, which *Trajan* is known to have made against them.

(g) *TRAJAN* was certainly a long experienc'd and successful Warrior. He had subdued the *German*, humbled the *Parthian*, and reduc'd already one Part of *Arabia* into a Province ; and yet, (h) when he came to besiege the City of the *Hagarenes*, upon every Assault, \* his Soldiers were so annoy'd with Whirl-Winds and Hail, and so frighten'd with Thunder and Lightning, and other Apparitions in the Air, (whilst their Meat was spoil'd and corrupted with Flies, even as they were eating it) that he was forced to give over the Siege, and was, not long after, seiz'd with a Disease, whereof he died.

ABOUT eight Years after this, the Emperor *Severus*, a very valiant and prosperous Warrior, whom *Herodian* makes no Scruple to prefer even before *Cæsar*, *Marius*, and *Sylla*, disdaining (as *Trajan* had done) that the *Hagarenes* should stand out still against the *Romans*; when all the rest about them had yielded, besieg'd their City (tho' it was but a small one) twice, and was twice repuls'd with Shame, and great Slaughter of his Men. In the second Assault indeed, he beat down some of their City-Wall, and thereupon founded a Retreat, in Hopes that they would have capitulated, and sur-

render'd up the hidden Treasure, suppos'd to be consecrated to the *Sun* : But when they continued resolute a whole Day, without giving any Intimations of a Treaty for a Peace, on the Morrow following, the *Roman* Army was quite intimidated. The *Europeans*, who were gallant Men before, refus'd to enter the Breach ; and the *Syrians*, who were forced to undertake that Service, had a grievous Repulse : Whereupon the Emperor, \* without making any fresh Attack, decamped from before the City, and departed to *Palestine* : Thus God deliver'd the City, says Dio, recalling the Soldiers by *Severus*, when they might have enter'd, and restraining *Severus* the second Day, by the Soldiers Backwardness.

T H E R E are only these two Things more, which we may observe from our Historian, worthy our Notice upon this Occasion : The first is, that the *Arabians* stood single in this their Extremity, against the whole *Roman* Power ; for none of their Neighbours wou'd assist them. The other Thing is, that the Emperor had Soldiers of all Nations in his Army ; for, “ whereas other Emperors, (i) says our “ *Author*, were contented with Guards of “ four different *European* Countries, *Severus* fill'd the City with a mixt Multitude “ of Soldiers of all Kinds, savage to look “ on, frightful to hear, and rude and wild “ to converse with.” So that, considering all Things, I think we may fairly conclude, that, every Man's Hand was, at this Time, against

(g) *Dio*, Hist. l. 68.

(h) *Revelation* Examind, Vol. II. Dissertation 4.

\* The above-recited Author, from whom I have compil'd this Account, assures his Reader, that he had, with all the Care he cou'd, examin'd all the Accounts of *Arabia*, that came in his Way, to see whether the Phenomena, and Calamities, here mention'd by *Dio* to have distress'd the *Roman* Army, were frequent in that Region, and that he had never been able to meet with any Instance of one of them, except sometimes Storms of Wind. If Hail, frightful Appearances in the Air, and Food infested with Flies, were ordinary Calamities in this Region, all the Accounts of the *Caravans*, that travel thro' the Desarts, wou'd necessarily be full of them ; whereas it is notorious, that the best Writers, who have left us faithful Diaries of these Affairs, do not so much as mention any of them ; and therefore they must certainly have proceeded from a divine Interposition in Favour of the *Hagarenes*, in Accomplishment of the Prediction concerning *Ishmael* and his Posterity.

\* The Historian tells us farther, that, after the Breach was made, the Conquest of the City was deem'd so easy, that a certain Captain in the Army undertook to do it himself, if he might have but 550 *European* Soldiers assign'd him : But, where shall we find so many Soldiers ? says the Emperor, meaning it of the Disobedience of the Army, to which he imputed his not carrying that Place. But now, how a Commander, who was at once belov'd and revered almost to Adoration by his Soldiers, cou'd not, with all his Authority, influence them to assault, when they were, in a Manner, at his Mercy, this can be no ways reconcil'd, without the Supposition of that Mighty Being occasioning it, who poureth, when he pleases, Contempt upon Princes, and bringeth their Counsels to nought.

(i) *Ammianus Marcellinus*.



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against Ishmael, and his Hand, his only Hand, against every Man's; and yet he dwelt, and still dwelleth in the Presence of all his Brethren: For not long after this, it is very well known, that the *Ishmaelites* join'd the *Goths* against the *Romans*, and, having afterwards overcome both, \* under the Name of *Saracens*, they erected a vast Empire upon their Ruins; and thus *Ishmael*, in the full Extent of the Prophecy, became a great Nation.

Circumcision of  
divine Insti-  
tution.

**CIRCUMCISION** is the cutting off the Fore-skin of the Member, which, in every Male, is the Instrument of Generation; and, whoever considers the Nature of this Operation, painful, if not indecent in those of Maturity, and to such, as live in hot Countries, highly inconvenient, if not dangerous; an Operation, wherein we can perceive no Footsteps of human Invention, as having no Foundation either in Reason, or Nature, or Necessity, or the Interest of any particular Set of Men, we must needs conclude, that Mankind cou'd never have put such a Severity upon themselves, unless they had been enjoin'd, and directed to it by a divine Command. Nay, this single Instance of *Abraham*, who, in the advanc'd Age of *ninety-nine*, underwent this hazardous Operation, and the very Indecency of it, in a Man of his Years and Dignity; these two Considerations are in the Place of ten thousand Proofs, that it was forc'd upon him; but Nothing, but the irresistible Authority of God, could be a Force sufficient in those Circumstances. So that the Strangeness and Singularity of this Ordinance is so far from being an Argument against it, that it is an evident Proof of its divine Institution; and, what was originally instituted by God, cannot in Strictness be accounted *immodest* (tho' we perhaps may have some such Conception of it) since (k) unto the Pure all Things

are pure, but unto them that are defiled, and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but even their Mind and Conscience is defiled. From Gen. xx—xxv. 11.

THE *Egyptians* indeed, (as (l) *Herodotus* informs us) pretend to practise this Rite, from no other Principle, but that of *Cleanliness*; and possibly, at that Time, they might so far have lost the Memorial of its true Origin, as not to retain any other Reason for their Observation of it: But since it is evident to a Demonstration, that they might, to all Intents and Purposes, be as clean without this Rite, as with it, 'tis absurd to suppose, that any Man of common Sense shou'd undergo Pain, and Hazard himself, and force the same Inconveniences upon his Posterity, merely for the Attainment of an End, which cou'd as fully and perfectly have been accomplish'd with<sup>at</sup> it.

THERE is a Passage indeed in the same *Herodotus*, wherein he tells us, "That the *Colchians*, the *Egyptians*, and the *Ethiopians*, were ~~the~~ the only Nations, that "circumcised from the Beginning, and "that the *Syrians* and *Phœnicians*, who "liv'd in *Palestine*, acknowledg'd they "borrow'd that Rite from them." But here the Historian is less to be blam'd for having run into this Error, since the *Egyptians* were a People naturally so vain, and conceited of their Antiquity, that they chose rather to impose upon him by a false Information (for all this Account he had but from Information) than confess that they receiv'd Circumcision from any other People. In the other Part of the Story, 'tis manifest, that they did impose upon him, when they told him that the Inhabitants of *Palestine* (whom he calls *Syrians* and *Phœnicians*) confess'd, that they receiv'd Circumcision from them; whereas there were no Inhabitants in *Palestine* circumcised but the *Jews*, and these always profess'd

Not found first  
among the  
Egyptians.

\* The *Ishmaelites*, as some imagine, upon the Reproaches of the *Jews*, who upbraided them with *Bashtardy*, became ashamed of their old Names, deriv'd from *Hagar* and *Ishmael*, which carried an Odium in the Sound, and took upon them the Name of *Saracens*, desiring to be accounted as the Descendants of *Abraham* by his Wife *Sarah*; but what destroys this *Etymology* is this, that the Antients call'd them *Sara-kenoi*, and not *Saraceni*, as they must have been call'd, if their Name had been deriv'd from *Sarah*; and therefore the learned *Scaliger* supposes the Word to come from the *Arabick* Word, *Sarack*, which signifies to *steal* or *plunder*. *Calmer's Dictionary*.

(k) Tit. i. 15.

(l) Lib. 2.



A. M.  
2108, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1896, &c.

fels'd to have receiv'd it directly from *Abraham*.

(m) *HERODOTUS* indeed, in all his Writings, has shewn, that he was a great Stranger to the Affairs of the *Jews*, and much more to the History of the Patriarchs, who so long preceded the Institution of their Republick. What he tells us of the Origin of Circumcision, viz. that it was among the *Egyptians* from the Beginning, is in a loose and vagrant Expression, accidentally dropt from him, or rather contriv'd on Purpose to conceal his Ignorance of the Matter: Whereas *Moses*, who was long before him, knew the History of the Patriarchs, and particularly that of *Abraham*; and therefore he does not content himself with popular or fabulous Reports, or endeavour to conceal his Meaning under indefinite and general Expressions, but marks out the particular Period, and gives us a plain and full Account both of the Causes and Circumstances of the whole Institution. The Truth is, there is no Comparison between the two Historians in this Particular; and therefore, if we will credit the *sacred Penman* in a Point, wherein his Knowledge could hardly be defective, so far were the *Egyptians* from prescribing to the *Hebrews* in the Rite of Circumcision, that, when *Abraham* was in *Egypt*, there was no such Custom then in Use.

Not in Egypt  
in Abraham's  
Time.

It was twenty Years after his Return from that Country, that God enjoin'd him the Rite of Circumcision; and then it is said, that (n) *Abraham* took *Ishmael* his Son, and all that were born in his House, and all that were bought with his Money, and circumcised the Flesh of their Fore-skin. Now it is evident, that when he came out of *Egypt* he brought Men-Servants and Maid-Servants with him in abundance; and therefore, unless we can suppose that all these *Egyptian* Men-Servants died within twenty Years, when the ordinary Period of Life was at least an Hundred; or that, when they died,

none of them left any Male-Issue behind them; we cannot but conclude, that Circumcision was not known in *Egypt* in *Abraham's* Time, because it is expressly said, that every Male, among the Men of *Abraham's* House, was circumcised at the same Time that he was, which could never have been, had they undergone that Operation before.

From Gen.  
xx—xxv. 11.

At what Time the Rite of Circumcision obtain'd in *Egypt*, is not so easy a Matter to determine; there is a Passage however in the Prophet *Jeremiah*, which, if taken in a literal Sense, is far from encouraging any high Pretensions to Antiquity: (o) *Behold the Days come, saith the Lord, that I will punish all them, that are circumcis'd, with the uncircumcis'd; Egypt, and Judah, and Edom, and the Children of Ammon, and Moab, &c. for all these Nations are uncircumcis'd, and all the House of Israel are uncircumcis'd in their Heart*: The plain Sense of which Words is this, — That God would visit the House of *Israel* like strange Nations; because, as the latter were uncircumcis'd in the Flesh, so the former were in the Heart. Not but that, in the Days of *Jeremiah*, the Rite of Circumcision was known and practis'd among the *Egyptians*, as well as among other Nations; but then it was not so common and general, nor was it at all us'd any where, till long after *Abraham's* Days.

One probable Opinion therefore is, that the *Arabians* receiv'd it from the *Ishmaelites*; that the *Egyptians* receiv'd it from the *Arabians*, or perhaps from *Abraham's* Children by *Keturah*; and that from the *Egyptians* the People of *Colchis*, knowing themselves to be of *Egyptian* Extract, embrac'd it, in Imitation of their illustrious Ancestors. But even suppose that this Custom was not established in *Egypt* by the Posterity, either of *Hagar*, or *Keturah*; yet why might not *Joseph*, in the Course of a most absolute Ministry for fourscore Years together, be able to intro-

duce

(m) *Rassius's* History of the *Jews*.

(n) Gen. xvii. 11, 25, 27.

(o) Jer. ix. 25, 26.



A. M.  
2108, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1896, &c.

duce it? (p) 'Tis the Practice, we know, nay, 'tis the Pride of Slaves, to imitate their Master's Manners, especially if he seems solicitous to have them do so; and therefore we need not doubt, but that, upon the least Intimation of his Pleasure, the *Egyptians* would readily embrace the religious Rites of so great, so wise, so powerful a Minister, who had preserv'd every one of their Lives, who had sav'd the whole Kingdom from Ruin, and was himself so visibly, and so remarkably guided by the Spirit of God. But whensoever, or from whomsoever it was, that the *Egyptians* learned this Rite, 'tis certain, that the Reason of its Institution was not with them the same, that it was among the *Jews*, and therefore the Circumcision itself must not be accounted the same.

The Reasons  
and Ends of  
its Institution.

WHOEVER looks into the Life of *Abraham*, will soon perceive, that God did, all along, design him for a Pattern of Faith and perfect Obedience, to all succeeding Generations. (q) The more his Faith was tried, the more illustrious it became, and the more Obstacles there were rais'd in the Accomplishment of the divine Promises, the more the good Patriarch shew'd, (in surmounting these Obstacles) the high Conception, he had entertain'd of him, from whom these Promises came. For, after a Promise of a numerous Posterity, why was it so long before he gave him any Son at all? After the Birth of *Ishmael*, why so long before the Promise of an Heir by his Wife *Sarah*? And after that Promise was given, why so long, even till the Thing was impossible, in an ordinary Course of Nature, before the Promise was accomplish'd, and the Child sent? All this was to exercise his Faith, and to give him an Opportunity of shewing to the World, how fully he was convinc'd, that, notwithstanding all these Impediments and Delays, God would certainly, by one Means or other, effectually make good his Promises. The like may be said of the Command of *Circumcision*. God did not only defer, for the Space of twenty whole

Years, the Birth of that Son, who was so solemnly promis'd; and so impatiently desir'd, but even, when that Time was expir'd, and *Abraham* might now justly hope to see the Promise accomplish'd, and his Faith crown'd; God was pleas'd to cross it again, by requiring of him the Performance of an Act, which, in all Appearance, would be a total Defeat to all his Hopes. For this Injunction; *My Covenant shall be in your Flesh*, to a Man of advanc'd Age, seems as opposite to the Promise of having a Son, as that other of *taking his Son, his only Son Isaac, and offering him up for a Burnt-Sacrifice*, was to the Promise of his being the Father of a numerous Posterity.

From Gen.  
xx—xxv. 11.

BUT *Abraham's* Faith triumph'd over this, as well as all other Obstacles. He immediately perform'd the Operation, notwithstanding its Oddness, its Danger, its seeming Indecency, and the apparent Opposition it had to the divine Promises: And, 'tis to preserve the Remembrance of the Faith of their great Ancestor, who, in so many discouraging Circumstances; *waited patiently on God, and against Hope believ'd in Hope* (as the Apostle expresses it) that God prescrib'd to the *Jewish* Nation the Sacrament of Circumcision. For this was a farther End of its Institution, not only to be a *Mark of Distinction* between the Posterity of *Abraham*, and all other Nations, but a *Token* likewise of God's Covenant made with him, and his Posterity, and a *Note of Commemoration* to put those, who bore it, continually in mind, whose Offspring they were, and what Advantages entitled to upon that Account, provided they took Care not to degenerate from the Glories of that Stock, from whence they sprang.

AND indeed, considering that *Abraham* was the first, we read of, whom God rescued from the general Corruption of Faith and Manners, which the World had now, a second Time, relaps'd into; and considering withal, that this Person and his Posterity were singled out

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for

(p) Revelation Examined, Vol. II. Dissertation 4.

(q) *Saurin's* Dissertation 15.



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for a *chosen Generation*, the *Repository* of Truth, and the *Receptacle* of God *incarnate*; there was Reason in Abundance, why this Remembrance should be very grateful to them: And apt enough, 'tis plain, upon all Occasions, they were to value themselves, and despise others, upon the Account of so particular an Honour. (r) But the Misfortune was, the most useful Part of the Reflection, *viz.* the eminent Faith and ready Obedience of so renown'd an Ancestor, and the noble Emulation of his Virtues, which such a Pattern ought to have inspir'd; this they were too apt to over-look, tho' any considering Man (as the Apostle (s) excellently argues) could not but perceive, that the only valuable Relation to *Abraham* is not that of *Consanguinity*, and natural Descent, but the Resemblance of his Virtues, and claiming under him as the *Father of the Faithful*.

AND this suggests another, and indeed none of the least considerable Ends, for which Circumcision was instituted; *viz.* to be a *Sign* of inward Virtue, and to figure out to us some particular Dispositions of Mind, which bore Resemblance to the outward Ceremony, and were requir'd to render it effectual; for which Reason it is, that we read so much, in the old Law (t), of *circumcising the Fore-skin of the Heart*, and hear the Apostle so frequently telling us, in the new, (u) of *putting off the Body of the Sins of the Flesh by the Circumcision of Christ*; (x) *for he is not a Jew, who is one outwardly, neither is that Circumcision, which is outward in the Flesh; but he is a Jew, who is one inwardly, and Circumcision is that of the Heart, in the Spirit, and not in the Letter, whose Praise is not of Men, but of God*.

Abraham's  
Conquest of the  
four Kings ac-  
counted for.

It may seem a little strange at first perhaps, that *Abraham*, whose Course of Life was *retir'd* and *philosophical*, shou'd, all on a sudden, commence so great a Warrior, as to be able to defeat four Kings, at once,

and their victorious Armies, with a small Number of his *Domesticks*, and some Assistance, that was given him by his Neighbours. His own Men were *three hundred and eighteen*; and what Force his Confederates, the three *Phœnician* Princes, brought to his Assistance, we do not find mention'd. We may probably enough suppose, that they did not exceed his own *Domesticks*; but then we are not oblig'd to affirm, that he fell upon the whole Body of the *Affyrian* Army with this small Retinue. This certainly wou'd have been too bold an Attempt for the little Company, which he commanded, and therefore the more likely Supposition is, — That coming up with them by Night, he divided his Men into two or three Parties, the better to make a Diversion, and conceal his Strength; that with *one* Party himself might attack the Head Quarters of King *Cherdorlaomer*, where the chief Feasting and Revelling was kept for Joy of their late Victories; that with *another* he might fall upon those, who were appointed to guard the Captives and the Spoil; and with a *third* might be beating up other Quarters; so that the *Affyrians*, being fatigu'd in their late Battle, surpriz'd at finding a new Enemy, and not knowing what their Number or Strength might be, or where their principal Attack was to begin, might endeavour to save themselves by Flight; which *Abraham* perceiving, might take the Advantage of their Fright, and pursue them, until he had made himself Master of the Prisoners and the Spoil, and then retire himself, as not thinking it advisable to follow them until the Day-light might discover the Weakness of his Forces.

ALL this might well enough be done by a common Stratagem in War, without any miraculous Interposition of Providence: But it is much more likely, that the same God, (y) who, in After-Ages, instructed one of his Posterity, even with such another little Handful of Men, not only to break

From Gen.  
xx—xxv. 11.

(r) *Stanhope*, on the Epistles and Gospels.  
(x) Rom. ii. 28, 29.

(i) Rom. iv. 11.

(j) Judges, at the vii. and viii. Chapters.

(t) Deut. x. 16.

(u) Col. ii. 11;



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break an Army of about two or three hundred thousand, but to kill of them, upon the Spot, no fewer, than an hundred and twenty Thousand; to disperse, at least as many more; to vanquish, after this, a Party of fifteen Thousand, that had retir'd in a Body; and, at last, to take all the four Kings, who were the Leaders of this *numerous*, or rather *numberless* Army (x); 'tis much more likely, I say, that the God of *Abraham* wou'd not be wanting to his Servant in his Counsels, and Suggestions upon this important Occasion: And, if a Party of three hundred Men, under the Conduct of a Person, every way inferior to *Abraham*, was, by a Stratagem in the Night, and by the Help of a sudden *Panick*, which God injected, enabled to defeat four mighty Princes, and to make such a prodigious Slaughter in their Camp; I cannot see, why a Person of that consummate Wisdom, and so highly favour'd by God with extraordinary Monitions upon all remarkable Emergencies, as *Abraham* was, might not, by God's Advice, make use of some such Stratagem, as *Gideon* did, tho' the Scripture is herein silent, that the Success might be imputed to the Operation of Faith in him, and not to the Agency of second Causes, or, what some call, the *Chance of War*.

Why Isaac submitted to be sacrificed.

OF what Age *Isaac* was, when *Abraham* was order'd to offer him up, is nowhere declar'd in Scripture. The Opinion of some learned *Jews*, that he was but twelve Years old, is ridiculous; since, at that Age, it wou'd have been impossi-

ble for him to have carry'd such a Load of Wood, as was requisite upon that Occasion: And others run it into a contrary Extreme, by supposing, that he was then seven and thirty Years of Age, which must have been the Year, wherein his Mother died, and yet she is said to have been alive when this Transaction happen'd. *Josephus* indeed makes him five and twenty, and some *Christian* (both antient and modern) Commentators suppose, that he was past thirty; but whatever his Age might be, 'tis acknowledg'd, that he was capable of making Resistance, and wou'd certainly have done it, had he not been very well satisfy'd, that the Command came from God. To this Purpose the \* *Jewish* Historian introduces *Abraham*, as making a very tender and pathetick Speech to his Son; inspiring him with a just Contempt of Life; and exhorting him to a due Submission to the divine Order and Decree; to all which *Isaac* attended (says our Author) with a Constancy and Resignation, becoming the Son of such a Father: And upon this their mutual Behaviour, (a) a very eloquent Father of the *Greek* Church has made this beautiful Reflection: " All  
" the Strength of reluctant Love cou'd not  
" withhold the Father's Hands, and all  
" the Horror of a *Dissolution* cou'd not  
" tempt the Son to move for his own  
" Preservation. Which of the two, *shall*  
" *we* say, deserves the Precedence in our  
" Wonder and Veneration? For there  
" seems to be a religious Emulation, or  
" Contest between them, which should  
" most

From Gén.  
XX—XXV. 11.

(x) *Bibliotheca Bib.* Vol. I. Occas. Annot. 19.

\* The Words, wherein *Josephus* makes *Abraham* address his Son upon this Occasion, are these: — " My dear Son, thou hast been the Child of many Prayers to me, and, since thy Coming into the World, I have spar'd for Nothing in thy Nurture and Education. There is not any Happiness, I have more wished for, than to see thee settled in a consummated State of Age and Reason; and, whenever God shall take me to himself, to leave thee in Possession of my Authority and Dominions. But, since it has been the Will of God, first to bestow thee upon me, and now to call thee back again, my dear Son, acquit thyself generously under so pious a Necessity. It is to God, that thou art dedicated, and deliver'd up on this Occasion, and it is the same God that now requires thee of me, in Return for all the Blessings and Favours he hath shower'd down upon us, both in War and Peace. 'Tis agreeable to the Law of Nature, for every one that is born, to die; and a more glorious End thou canst never have, than to fall, by the Hand of thy own Father, a Sacrifice to the God and Father of the Universe, who hath rather chosen to receive thy Soul into a blessed Eternity, upon the Wings of Prayer, and ardent Ejaculations, than to suffer thee to be taken away by Sickness, War, Passion, or any other of the common Chances of Mankind. Consider it well, and thou wilt find, that in that heavenly Station, to which thou art now call'd, thou mayest make thyself the true Support of thy aged Father, and that, instead of my Son *Isaac*, I shall have God himself for my Guardian." *Antiq.* l. i. c. 14.

(a) *Gregor. Nyss.* de Deitate Fil. & Spirit. Sanct. p. 908.



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2108, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1896, &c.

“ most remarkably signalize himself ; the  
“ Father, in loving God more than his  
“ own Child, and the Son, in the Love  
“ of Duty above his own Life.”

THIS is a gallant Instance of a profound Submission to the divine Will ; and yet (not to detract from the Merit of it) if we consider the Matter coolly, it was no more, than what many *Martyrs*, even under the *Jewish* Oeconomy, equally have perform'd. They have given themselves up, in Testimony of their Love to God, to Deaths as cruel, as terrible, as this, which *Isaac* was to suffer ; (b) *They were stoned, were saw'd asunder, were tortur'd ; and yet they accepted not Deliverance, that they might inherit a joyful Resurrection.*

Various Opinions concerning the Pillar of Salt.

THE *Metamorphosis* of *Lot's Wife* is one of the most wonderful Events in Scripture, and therefore those, who are unwilling, *as they say*, to multiply Miracles without a Cause, from the different Senses, which the Words in the Text are capable of, have endeavour'd to affix another Interpretation to them. Thus the Word, which we render *Pillar*, or *Statue*, besides its obvious Signification, may, in a *metaphorical* Sense, be applied to denote any Thing, that, like a Pillar, or Stone, is *immoveable* and *hard* ; and, according to this Acceptation, these Interpreters suppose, that *Moses* might intend no more, than that *Lot's Wife* was struck dead with Fear, or Surprise, or any other Cause, and so remain'd motionless, like a Stone.

IN like Manner, (c) the Word, which we render *Salt*, besides its common Signification, does sometimes denote a *dry and barren Soil*, such as is found about the *Asphaltic Lake* : And thus the Sense of the Words, applied to *Lot's Wife*, intimates, that the Place of her Death was in a *barren Country*, or in the *Land of Salt*. At other Times it signifies a *long Space*, or *Continuance of Time*, because (d) we find an *everlasting Covenant*, call'd a *Covenant of Salt*, (Salt being therefore an

Emblem of *Eternity*, because the Things, that are season'd therewith, continue incorrupt for many Years) and in this Sense *Lot's Wife* may be said to become an (e) *everlasting Monument* of the divine Displeasure, without any Consideration either of the *Form* or *Matter*, whereinto she was chang'd : And from these Significations of the Words, they draw this Explication of the Passage. — “ That *Lot's Wife*, “ either looking back upon the City, when “ she saw it all in a Smoak, and Fire from “ Heaven pouring down upon it, was “ struck dead with the frightful Sight, in “ a Country, that was *afterwards* barren “ and unfruitful : Or that, not only stopping, but returning towards the City “ (when the Angel was gone) she was suffocated by some poisonous Vapour, and “ perish'd in the common Conflagration.” And this, *as they say*, saves a Miracle, and answers the End of Providence full as well, as if the Woman had actually been turn'd into a *Pillar of Salt*, which never was, and never will be prov'd by any authentick Testimony.

ALL this is plausible enough ; and yet those, who adhere to the *literal* Sense of the Words, have this to say in their Vindication, — That the Vale of *Siddim*, where *Sodom*, and the other Cities stood, was originally a very fruitful Soil (as most bituminous Countries are) which induc'd *Lot* to make Choice of it for the Pasturage of his Cattle, but is, at present, the very Reverse, a poor, barren Land, full of Sulphur and Salt-Pits : And hence they infer, that all the sulphureous and saline Matter, which is found in this Tract of Ground now, was the Effect of divine Vengeance, and shower'd down upon it, when God destroyed *Sodom*, and its neighbouring Cities. They therefore suppose, that the Woman, standing still too long to behold the Destruction of her Country, some of that dreadful Shower, in the Manner of great *Flecks* of Snow, fell upon her, and, clinging to her Body, wrapp'd it all over,

as

(b) Heb. xi. 35, 37.  
xxix. 23.

(c) Vid. *Le Clerc's* Dissert. in Locum.

(d) Numb. xviii. 19.

(e) Deut.



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2108, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1896, &c.

as it were in a Sheet of *nitrosulphureous* Matter, which congeal'd into a Cruft as hard as a Stone, and made her appear like a Statue or Pillar of † *metallick* Salt, having her Body enclos'd, and, as it were, *candied* all over with it. And, to maintain this their Hypothesis, they assert, That all *indurated* Bodies (as *Chymists* well know) are (as they speak) highly *saturated* with a *saline* Principle, and that all Coagulations and Concretions, in the Mixture of Bodies, are effected by this Means : So that it was not possible to express such a Transmutation as *Lot's Wife* underwent, whether it was simply by *Incrustation*, or by total *Penetration*, more properly, than *Moses* has done. They produce Instances from the best Historians of several *Petrefactions*, both of Men and Cattle (almost as wonderful, as this of *Lot's Wife*) standing in the very same Posture, wherein they were found at the Instant of their Transmutation, for several Generations afterwards ; and, for the Confirmation of this in particular, they vouch the Testimony of the Author of the *Book of Wisdom*, who makes mention of a *standing Pillar of Salt*, as a *Monument of an unbelieving Soul*, and the Authority of the LXX Interpreters, who expressly render it so. Among *Jewish* Writers, they cite the Words (f) of *Josephus*, who tells us, that *Lot's Wife*, casting her Eye perpetually back upon the City, and being too much concern'd about it, contrary to what God had forbid her, was turn'd into a Pillar of Salt, which I myself, as he tells us, have seen : They cite the Words of *Philo*, who frequently takes notice of this *Metamorphosis*, and, in his *Allegories of the Law*, more particularly, declares, that, for the Love of Sodom, *Lot's Wife* was turn'd into a Stone : And, among *Christian* Writers, they produce that Pas-

sage of *Clemens*, in his Epistle to the *Corinthians* ; *Lot's Wife* went along with him, but being of a different Spirit, and not persisting in Concord with him, she was therefore placed for a Sign, and continues a Statue of Salt to this very Day ; together with the Testimony of *Irenæus*, and several other Fathers of the Church.

THE Accounts, which *modern* Historians and Travellers give us of this Matter, are so very different and uncertain, that we cannot so well tell where to fix our Belief. *Bochart*, in his Description of the *Holy-Land*, tells us, that he gave himself the Fatigue of a very troublesome Journey, to behold this Statue, but was not so happy as to satisfy his Curiosity ; for the Inhabitants assur'd him the Place was inaccessible, and cou'd not be visited without apparent Danger of Death, because of the prodigious Beasts and Serpents that abounded there, but more especially, because of the *Biduini*, a very savage and inhuman Sort of People, that dwelt near it : And yet, if we will believe other Writers of this Kind, they will tell us expressly, that there is still some Part of it remaining, and to be seen, between *Engaddi* and the *Dead-Sea*.

WE will suppose however for once, that the long Duration of this Monument is an Imposition of the Inhabitants upon the Credulity of Strangers ; yet it will not therefore follow, that there never was any such Thing in being, unless we can think it inconsistent with the Nature of God to work a Miracle for the Punishment of a wicked Woman. Miracles indeed are not to be multiplied, unless there be Occasion for them : But, when the plain Sense of the Words leads us to such a Construction, 'tis a Niceness, I think, no way commendable, to endeavour to find out another, merely for the Sake of avoiding

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the

† Most of the Interpreters have observ'd to us, that we must not take the *Salt*, here mention'd, for common Salt, which Water soon dissolves, and cou'd not possibly continue long, being expos'd to the Wind and Rain ; but for *metallick* Salt, which was hewn out of the Rock, like Marble, and made use of in building Houses, according to the Testimony of several Authors. *Watfius*, Miscell. Tom. 1. and *Pliny* (l. 31. c. 7.) tell us, that in *Africa*, not far from *Utica*, there are vast Heaps of Salt, like Mountains, which, when once harden'd by the Sun and Moon, cannot be dissolv'd with Rain, or any other Liquor, nor penetrated with any Kind of Instrument made with Iron. *Heidegger's* Hist. Patriar. Vol. II. Exercit. 8.

(f) Antiq. l. 1. c. 12.

From Gen.  
xx—xxv. 11.



A. M.  
2108, &c.  
Ant. Chriſt.  
1896, &c.

the Miraculousneſs of the Fact ; as if the Scriptures were more valuable, for containing Nothing but obvious Matters, and the *Majeſty* of God any way magnify'd, by ſeeming to exert as little of its *omnipotent* Power, as poſſible.

The Probabi-  
lity of its Exi-  
ſtence.

THE ſhort of the Matter is this, — We have a clear Account, in a Book full of Wonders, of a Woman, confeſſedly guilty of Diſobedience and Ingratitude, ſtruck dead by the Hand of God, and turn'd into a Statue of Salt, for a Monument of Terror to future Generations. And, is there any Thing in this, ſo repugnant to Reaſon, or ſo incongruous for God to do, that we muſt immediately flee to another Interpretation, and to make the Matter eaſy, reſolutely maintain, that the whole Purport of the Thing is only this, — That the poor Woman either ſuddenly died of a Fright, or indiſcretely fell into the Fire ? God certainly may work a Miracle when he pleaſes, and puniſh any wicked Perſon in what Manner he thinks fit ; nor is there any more Wonder in the *Metamorphoſis* of *Lot's* Wife, than there was in changing the Rod of *Moſes* into a Serpent. The ſame Power might do both ; and ſince the ſame Hiſtory has recorded both, there is the ſame Reaſon for the Credibility of both. Nay, of the two, the Transformation of *Lot's* Wife ſeems more familiar to our Conceptions, \* ſince we want not Inſtances, as I ſaid before, of Perſons ſtruck with Lightning, and kill'd with cold Vapours, that have immediately petrify'd in the ſame Manner.

Why God  
punish'd *Lot's*  
Wife ſo ſevere-  
ly.

WHY ſhe was turn'd into a Body of *Salt*, rather than any other Subſtance, is

only reſolvable into the good Pleaſure of God. The Conjecture of *Jewiſh* Writers upon this Head, we acknowledge, are trifling ; nor are we reſponſible for the *Reveries* of ſuch *Chriſtian* Commentators, as wou'd croud in a Multitude of palpable Abſurdities, merely to make the Miracle more portentous : But, why God exacted ſo ſevere a Penalty for an Offence ſo ſeemingly ſmall, is not ſo hard to be reſolv'd ; becauſe, according to the Light, wherein we are to conſider this Woman, her Diſobedience to the divine Command had in it all the Malignity of an obſtinate and perverſe Mind, unthankful to God for his Preſervation of her, and too cloſely attach'd, if not to the wicked Cuſtoms, at leaſt to the Perſons and Things, which ſhe had left behind her in that Sink of Sin and Senſuality.

BUT there is another Obſervation, which we may draw (g) from our Saviour's Application of this Story, as well as (b) the Angel's Expreſſions to *Lot*, viz. that ſhe loiter'd by the Way, if not return'd to the City ; and if ſo, 'tis no Wonder that ſhe ſuffer'd, when ſhe was found within the Compaſs of the *ſulphureous* Streams from Heaven ; nor can God be blam'd for his exemplary Punishment of her, unleſs we think it reaſonable for his Providence, in this Caſe, to have interpos'd, and wrought a Miracle for *her* Preſervation, who had ſo little deſerv'd it, and had run herſelf voluntarily into the Jaws of Deſtruction.

THUS we have endeavour'd to vindicate the Character of the Patriarch *Abraham*, and to account for ſeveral Tranſactions and Paſſages in Scripture, which ſeem to give

Heathen Tr-  
ſimonies to the  
ſame Purpoſe.

\* *Biſſinus* [in his *Argon. Americ. l. 14. c. 2.*] has a very remarkable Story to this Purpoſe : He tells us, that *Badicus Amalgus*, who was the firſt Man that ever march'd an Army over the Mountains between *Peru* and *Cibili*, by the Extremity of the Cold, and Unwholſomneſs of the Air, loſt, in that Expedition, a great many Men. Being oblig'd however, ſome few Months after, to return the ſame Way, what the Hiſtorian tells us upon this Occaſion is very wonderful—*Stabant adhuc equites pediteſque, qui quinto ante menſe, obriguerant, immoti, inconfumpti, ſitu, formâ, habitu, quo repentina peſtis quemque alligaverat. Alius pronus, humi ſtratus, alius reſtus, non nemo videbatur infera manibus fræna quaſſare. Ad ſummam, invenit eos tales, quales reliquerat ; odore nullo tetro, colore non ſolito funebribus, ac, niſi quod anima dudum intercidiffet, cætera ſpirantibus, quam extinctis, ſimiliores.* To the like Purpoſe it is related by *Aventinus*, (Annot. Bavar. l. 7.) a credible Hiſtorian, that, in his Time, above fifty Country People, with their Cows and Calves, in *Carinthia*, were all deſtroy'd at once by a ſtrong ſuffocating Exhalation, which immediately after an Earthquake (in the Year 1348) aſcended out of the Earth, and reduc'd them to *ſaline Statues*, ſuch as that of *Lot's* Wife, which, he tells us, were ſeen both by himſelf, and by the Chancellor of *Auſtria*. *Bibliotheca Bibl. Vol. I. Occaſ. Annot. 22.*

(g) Luke xvii. 31, 32.

(b) Gen. xix. 22.



A. M.  
2108, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1896, &c.

give Umbrage to Infidelity, during the Compass of his Life. And for the Confirmation of all this, we might now produce the Testimony of *profane* Authors, and make it appear, that *Abraham's* Fame for a just, virtuous, and religious Man, is spoken of by *Berosus* in a Fragment preserv'd (i) by *Josephus*: That his being born in *Ur* of the *Chaldees*, his Removal into *Canaan*, and afterwards Sojourning in *Egypt*, is related by *Eupolemus*, as he is quoted (k) by *Eusebius*: That the Captivity of his Nephew *Lot*, his Victory over the four Kings, and honourable Reception by *Melchisedeck*, King of the sacred City of *Argarize*, and Priest of God, are recorded by the same Author: That his marrying two Wives, one an *Egyptian*, by whom he had a Son, who was the Father of twelve Kings in *Arabia*, and the other a Woman of his own Kindred, by whom he had likewise one Son, whose Name in *Greek* was Γελδς, which answers exactly to the *Hebrew* Word, *Isaac*; and that this *Isaac* he was commanded to sacrifice, but, when he was going to kill him, was stopp'd by an Angel, and offer'd a *Ram* in his Stead; all this is related by *Antiphanus*, as he is quoted (l) by the same *Eusebius*: That the antient Custom of *Circumcision* is taken notice of (m) by *Herodotus*, *Diodorus*, *Strabo*, and others: That the Burning of *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*, and the strange Waste it

has made in a once most beautiful Country, is describ'd (n) by *Strabo*, *Tacitus*, and *Solinus*: That (o) *Isaac's* being born to a Father, when old, and to a Mother, incapable of Conception, gave occasion of the Story of the miraculous Birth of *Orion*, by the Help of the Gods, even when his Father *Hyreus* had no Wife at all: That *Lot's* kind Reception of the two Angels in *Sodom*, his protecting them from the Insults of the People, and escaping thereupon the Destruction that befel them, are all well delineated in the common Fable of *Baucis* and *Philemon*: And (to mention no more) that the Fate of his Wife for her looking back upon *Sodom*, and her being thereupon chang'd into a Statue of *metallick* Salt, gave Rise to the Poet's Fiction of the Loss of *Eurydice*, and her Remission into Hell, for her Husband's turning to look upon her, and of *Niobe's* being chang'd into a Stone, for resenting the Death of her Children. So well has infinite Wisdom provided, that the sacred Truths of divine Revelation should not only be supported by the Attestation of all antient History, but preserv'd likewise even in the Vanity and Extravagance of Fables; for even *they*, O Lord, *shew the Glory of thy Kingdom, and talk of thy Power; that thy Power, thy Glory, and the Mightiness of thy Kingdom might be known unto Men.*

From Gen.  
xx—xxv. 11.

## DISSERTATION I.

### Of the Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrhah.

OF all God's Judgments upon the Wicked, next to that of the universal Deluge, the Destruction of *Sodom*, and the neighbouring Cities in the Plain of *Jordan*, seems to be one of the most remarkable, and the most dreadful Interpositions of Providence; and may there-

fore, in this Place, deserve a particular Consideration.

THAT this *Catastrophe* (as (p) the Apostle calls it) did really happen, according to the Account, which *Moses* gives us of it, we have the concurring Testimony of all Historians, both *antient* and *modern*, to convince

(i) Antiq. l. 1. c. 8.  
Veritate.

(n) Ibid.

(k) Prepar. Evang. l. 9. c. 17.

(o) Hist. Quell. Abnetan. l. 2.

(l) Ibid. c. 18.

(p) 2 Pet. ii. 6.

(m) Hug. Grot. de

The Reality of  
it.



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convince us. (q) *Diodorus Siculus*, after having given us a Description of the Lake *Asphaltites* (which now fills the Place, where these Cities once stood) acquaints us, that the adjacent Country was then on Fire; and sent forth a grievous Smell, to which he imputes the sickly and short Lives of the neighbouring Inhabitants. (r) *Strabo*, having made mention of the same Lake, pursues his Account, and tells us, that the craggy and burnt Rocks, the Caverns broken in, and the Soil all about it adust, and turn'd to Ashes, give Credit to a Report among the People, that formerly several Cities stood there, (whereof *Sodom* was the chief) but that by Earthquakes, and Fire breaking out, there were some of them entirely swallow'd up, and others forsaken by the Inhabitants, that could make their Escape. (s) *Tacitus* describes the Lake much in the same Manner with these other Historians, and then adds, that not far from it are the Fields, now barren, which were reported formerly to have been very fruitful, and adorn'd with large Cities, which were burnt by Lightning, and do still retain the Traces of their Destruction. (t) *Solinus* is clearly of Opinion, that the Blackness of the Soil, and its being turn'd into Dust and Ashes, is a sure Token of its having suffer'd by Fire from Heaven; and, if we may believe the Report of (u) a late Traveller, according to the Account which he had from the Inhabitants themselves, some of the Ruins of these ancient Cities do still appear, whenever the Water is low and shallow.

The Number of  
Cities, that  
were destroy'd.

WHAT the Number of these Cities were, is a Matter, wherein we can have no absolute Certainty. *Moses*, in the Text, makes mention but of two, *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*; but, in another Place, he enumerates four, and gives this Description of their dreadful Punishment. (x) *When the Generations to come shall see the Plague of that Land, and the Sicknesses, which the Lord hath laid upon it, and that the whole*

*Land thereof is Brimstone, and Salt, and Burning like the Overthrow of Sodom, and Gomorrhah, Abnoth, and Zeboim, (which the Lord overthrew in his Anger, and in his Wrath) even all the Nations shall say, Wherefore hath the Lord done this unto the Land? Nay, if we will believe (y) the Historian above-cited, and who perhaps might have an Account of the Thing from some Phœnician Writer, the Number of the Cities, which, at this Time, were destroy'd, were thirteen; and to this there is a Passage in the Prophet, which seems to give some Countenance, tho' not as to the precise Number of them: (z) As I live, saith the Lord God to Jerusalem, Sodom, thy Sister, has not done, she nor her Daughters (i. e. the Cities, which were built round it, and were tributary to it) have not done, as thou and thy Daughters have done. But, whatever the Number of the Cities might be, it will be proper for us, before we come to enquire in what Manner they were destroy'd, to give some Account of their Situation.*

(a) THE Plain of *Jordan* includes the greatest Part of the flat Country, thro' which the River *Jordan* runs, from its coming out of the Sea of *Galilee*, to its falling into the *Asphaltite Lake*, or *Salt-Sea*. But we are not to imagine, that this Plain was once a continu'd Level, without any Risings or Descents: The greatest Part of it indeed was Champion-Country, (and for this Reason was commonly called *Μεγαμέδιον*, or *the great Field*) but therein we read (b) of the *Valley of Jericho*, and (c) of the *Vale of Siddim*; in the latter of which these Cities stood, in a Situation so very advantageous, that we find it compared (d) to the Land of *Egypt*, nay even to the Garden of *Paradise*, upon account of its being so well water'd. And well it might, seeing it had (as the *Lacus Asphaltites* has to this Day) not only the Streams of the River *Jordan* running quite thro' it, but (e) the River *Arnon* from the East, (f) the

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(q) Lib. 19. from *Alippo* to *Jerusalem*.

(r) Lib. 10.

(s) Lib. 5.

(t) Chap. xxxv.

(u) *Maunderell's Journey*

(v) Deut. xxix. 22, 23, 24.

(y) *Strabo*, l. 16.

(z) Ezek. xvi. 48.

(a) *Well's Geography of the Old Testament*, Vol. I. xiii. 10. Vide Page 213, in the Notes.

(b) Deut. xxxiv. 3.

(c) Gen. xiv. 3.

(d) Chap.

(e) *Josephus's Antiq.* l. 4. c. 4.

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(f) the Brook Zered, and the (g) famous Fountain *Callirrhoe*, from the South, falling into it. Now, since all this Water had no direct Passage into the Sea, it must necessarily follow, either that it was convey'd away by some *subterraneous* Passage, or was swallow'd up in the Sands; that every where encompassed it; which might the more easily be done, because the Inhabitants of those hot Countries us'd to divide their Rivers into several small Branches, for the Benefit of watering their Feilds.

The Wickedness of their Inhabitants.

AND as this Plenty of Water gave great Riches to the Soil, and Fertility to the Country, so Wealth and Abundance of all Things (as Mankind are too apt to abuse God's Gifts) made *Sodom*, and the neighbouring Cities very infamous for their Wickedness and Impiety. The Prophet *Ezekiel* gives us a Description of them: (h) *Behold this was the Iniquity of thy Sister Sodom; Pride, Fullness of Bread, and Abundance of Idleness was in her, and in her Daughters, neither did she strengthen the Hand of the Poor and Needy, but was haughty, and committed Abomination before me; which (i) Josephus* might have in his Eye, when he gave us this Account of them. "The Sodomites, says he, waxed proud, and, by Reason of their Riches and Wealth, grew contumelious towards Men, and impious towards God; so that they were wholly unmindful of the Favours, they receiv'd from him. They were inhospitable to Strangers, and too proud and arrogant to be rebuk'd. They burnt in unnatural Lusts towards one another, and took Pleasure in none, but such as

NUMB. XXII.

" ran to the same Excess of Riot with themselves."

From Gen. xx—xxv. 11.

The Manner, wherein they were destroy'd.

THESE, and other abominable Enormities, provok'd the divine Ruler of the World to destroy their Cities; whose Cry was now grown great for Vengeance; and the Manner, wherein it was effected, *Moses* has recorded in these Words: (k) *Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah Brimstone and Fire from the Lord out of Heaven, and he overthrew the Cities, and all the Plain, and all the Inhabitants of the Cities; and that which grew upon the Ground; and for the better understanding of this, we must observe, 1st, (l) That, in the Vale of Siddim, (the Tract of Ground, which was now destroy'd) there were a great many Pits of Bitumen, which, being a very combustible Matter, (m) is, in some Places, liquid, in others solid; and not only found near the Surface of the Earth, but lies sometimes very deep, and is dug from the very Bowels of it. 2dly, We must observe, that the Brimstone and Fire, which the Lord is said to rain upon Sodom and Gomorrah, means Brimstone inflam'd; that, in the Hebrew Stile, Brimstone inflam'd signifies Lightning; and that the Reason, why Lightning is thus describ'd, no one can be ignorant of, that has either smelt the Places, which have been struck with Thunder, or \* read what learned Men have wrote upon the Subject: 3dly, We must observe further, that God is not only said to have rained down Brimstone and Fire, but Brimstone and Fire FROM THE LORD; where the Addition of *from the Lord*, which, at first Sight, may appear to be superfluous, or to denote a Plurality of Persons in the*

Q q q q Deity

(f) Numb. xxi. 12.

(g) Pliny, l. 5. c. 16.

(h) Chap. xvi. 49, 50.

(i) Antiq. l. 1. c. 12.

(k) Gen. xix. 24, 25.

(l) Le Clerc's Commentary.

(m) Pliny's Natural History, l. 25. c. 15.

\* Thus Thunder and Lightning, says Pliny (Lib. 35. c. 15.) have the Smell of Brimstone, and the very Light and Flame of them is sulphureous: And Seneca (Quaest. Nat. l. 2. c. 21.) tells us, that all Things, which are struck by Lightning, have a sulphureous Smell; as indeed our natural Philosophers have plainly demonstrated, that, what we call the Thunder-bolt, is nothing else but a sulphureous Exhalation. Persius, in his second Satire, calls it Sulphur sacrum.

Ignovisse putas, quia cum tonat, ocyus Illex  
Sulphure discutitur sacro, quam tuque, Domusque.

And for this Reason the Greeks, in their Language, call Brimstone *θεῖον*, i. e. *divine*, because the Thunder-bolt, which it assimilates, is suppos'd to come from God. Le Clerc's Dissertation.



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Deity (as most *Christian* Interpreters would have it) does more particularly describe the *Thunder-bolt*, \* which, by the *Hebrews*, as well as other Nations, is frequently call'd the *Fire of God*, the *Fire from God*, &c. and the Reason is,——Because, Men having no Power over this Kind of *Meteor*, and it being impossible for them, by any Kind of Contrivance, to ascend up to the Clouds, God is therefore suppos'd to dwell there, and to cast down his Bolts from thence.

Now, from these Observations put together, we may, in some measure, form a Notion to ourselves, how this Destruction came to be effected. For, tho' *Moses* does not inform us, after what Manner the Lightning and Thunder-bolts from above subverted these Cities, and their adjacent Territories; yet, since he plainly makes mention of them, we cannot comprehend how it could happen any otherwise, than that the Lightning and Thunder-bolts, falling, in great Abundance, upon some Pits of *Bitumen*, \* the Veins of that combustible Matter took Fire immediately, and as the Fire penetrated into the lowermost Bowels of the bituminous Soil, these wic-

ked Cities were subverted by a dreadful Earthquake, which was follow'd with a subsiding of the Ground; and that, \* as soon as the Earth was sunk, it would unavoidably fall out, that the Waters, running to this Place in so great an Abundance, and mixing with the *Bitumen*, which they found in great Plenty, would make a Lake of what was a Valley before, and a Lake of the same Quality, with what † the Scripture calls the *Salt-Sea*.

THIS Lake, according to the Account we have of it, is enclosed, to the *East* and *West*, with exceeding high Mountains; on the *North* it is bounded by the Plain of *Jericho*, on which Side it receives the Waters of *Jordan*; on the *South* it is open, and extends beyond the Reach of the Eye, being twenty-four Leagues long, and six or seven broad. Its Water is extremely deep and heavy; so heavy, that a Man cannot, without Difficulty, sink in it; but of so nauseous a Taste, and noisome Smell, that neither Fish, nor Fowl accus-tom'd to the Water, can live in it. It is full of *Bitumen*, which, at uncertain Sea-sons, boils up from the Bottom in Bubbles,

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A Description  
of the Lacus  
Asphaltites.

\* Thus, in the second Book of *Kings*, THE FIRE OF GOD came down from Heaven, and devoured them, Ch. i. 12. And *Isaiah* uses the same Expression, Ch. lxi. 16. He shall be punished with THE FIRE OF THE LORD; to which the Passage in the *Latin* Poet exactly agrees:

Illicet igne Jovis, lapsisque citator astris,

Tritibus exiit Ripis. ——— Stat. Theb. l. 1.

Some however have remark'd it, as a peculiar Elegancy in the *Hebrew* Tongue, that it very often makes use of the *Antecedent* instead of the *Relative*, or the *Noun* instead of the *Pronoun*, especially when it means to express a Thing with great Vehemence, or to denote any Action to be supernatural or miraculous. *Heidegger's Hist. Patriar.* Vol. II. Exercit. 8.

\* In *Lycia*, the *Hephasian* Mountains, says *Pliny*, (l. 2. c. 106.) if you do but touch them with a lighted Torch, immediately take Fire; nay the very Stones in the Rivers, and Sands in the Waters, burn. If you take a Stick out of these Waters, and draw Furrows upon the Ground with it (according to the common Report) a Tract of Fire follows it. *Le Clerc's Dissertation.*

\* *Strabo* in his first, and *Pliny* in his second Book, will furnish us with several Examples of this Kind. *Strabo*, out of *Poſidonius*, tells us (p. 40.) that in *Phœnicia*, a certain City, situate above *Sidon*, was absorb'd by an Earthquake; and out of *Demetrius Scythius*, that several Earthquakes have happen'd in *Asia Minor*, by which whole Towns have been devoured, the Mountain *Siphylis* overthrown, and the Marshes turned into standing Lakes: And *Pliny* (l. 2. c. 88.) testifies, that by a Fire, which suddenly broke out of it, the Mountain *Epapros* was levelled to the Ground, and a Town buried in the Deep; for the Arch, that supported the Grovnd, breaking in, and the Matter underneath being wholly consum'd, the Soil above must, of Necessity, sink, and be swallow'd up in these Caverns, if they were of any large Extent. *Le Clerc's Dissertations.*

† It is called the *Salt-Sea*, not only because its Waters are salt to a great Degree, but to distinguish it likewise from two other Lakes, the Lake of *Samachon*, and the Lake of *Gennesareth* (through which the River *Jordan* runs) which are fresh Water. It obtain'd in Time the Name of the *Dead-Sea*, not only because its Waters are immoveable, and more like a Sea of liquid Pitch, than of Water; but because no living Creature can abide in it; nor any Plant, or Tree grow near it, by reason of those bituminous Effluvia, which it sends forth; and, from the Abundance of this Matter, it most frequently occurs in heathen Writers under the Title of *Lacus Asphaltites*. *Hylin's Cosmography.*



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at which Time the Superficies of the Lake swells, and resembles the Rising of an Hill. Adjoining to the Lake are Fields, which formerly (as we shewed from *Tacitus*) were fruitful, but are now so parch'd, and burnt up, that they have lost their Fertility; insomuch that every Thing, whether it grows spontaneously, or be planted by Man, whether it be Herb, Fruit, or Flower, \* as soon as it is compress'd, moulders away immediately into Dust; and to this (n) the Author of the Book of *Wisdom* seems to allude, when he tell us, that, of the Wickedness of those Cities, the waste Land, that smoketh to this Day, is a Testimony, and the Plants bearing Fruit, that never come to Ripeness.

“THE Cinders, Brimstone, and Smoke, (o) says Philo, and a certain obscure Flame, as it were, of a Fire burning, still perceivable in some Parts of the Country, are Memorials of the perpetual Evil, which happen'd to it;” and, as (p) *Josephus* adds, the Things that are said of Sodom, are confirm'd by ocular Inspection; there being some Relicks of the Fire, which came down from Heaven, and some Resemblance of the five Cities, still to be seen:” And 'tis the Duration of these Monuments of divine Wrath perhaps, which gave Occasion to St *Jude* to say, that the wicked Inhabitants of these Cities were set forth for an Example, suffering the Vengeance of eternal Fire, i. e. of a Fire, whose Marks were to be perpetuated unto the End of the World: † For it is a common

Thing in Scripture, to express a great and irreparable Vastation, whose Effects and Signs shall be permanent to the latest Ages, by the Word αἰώνιον, which we here render *eternal*.

THUS, in all Probability, were the Cities of the Plain of *Jordan* overthrown: Nor is there any Doubt to be made, but that the miraculous Hand of God was employed in sending down this heavy Judgment. For, (q) tho' in a Soil, impregnated with Bitumen, the Cities, which are built thereon, may be shaken with an *Earthquake*, and swallow'd up by a sudden *Hiat*; tho' Thunderbolts may fall, and set the Veins of Sulphur and Bitumen on Fire, which, afterwards breaking out, and mingling with the Water, may, in a low Valley, easily cause a Lake full of *Asphaltus*: Tho' these Things, I say, in Process of Time, might have come to pass in an ordinary course of Nature; yet, if they were done, before their *natural Causes* were in a Disposition to produce them; if they would not have been done *that Instant*, unless it had been for some extraordinary Interposition of God, or his blessed Angels; it ought to be reputed no less a *Miracle*, than if every Particular in the Transaction had plainly surpassed the usual Operations of Nature. And, that the Judgment now before us, happened in this Manner, (r) the two Angels, dispatch'd by Almighty God upon this important Occasion, (s) God's foretelling *Abraham* his Design, the Angels acquainting *Lot* with the Errand, about which they came, and their urging

From Gen  
xx—xxv. 11.  
How far it  
was miracu-  
lous.

and

\* Whether there be any Truth in this Part of the Account of *Tacitus*, 'tis hard to tell. As for the Apples of Sodom (to which he seems to allude) Mr *Maundrell* tells us, that he never saw, nor heard of any thereabouts, nor was there any Tree to be seen near the Lake, from which one might expect such Kind of Fruit; and therefore he supposes the Being, as well as the Beauty, of that Fruit a meer Fiction, and only kept up, because it serv'd for a good Allusion, and now and then helped Poets to a poetical Similitude. Journey from *Aleppo* to *Jerusalem*.

(n) Chap. x. 7.

(o) In *Vita Moysi*, l. 2.

(p) De Bello Jud. l. 5. c. 27.

† Thus God threatens to make the People of *Israel* ἐρημικὴν αἰώνιον, a perpetual Desolation, *Ezekel*. xxxv. 9. σὺργμα αἰώνιον, a perpetual Hissing, *Jer.* xviii. 16. and δειδισμὸν αἰώνιον, an everlasting Reproach, *Jer.* xxiii. 40. and this more especially is threaten'd, where the Destruction of a City or Nation is compar'd to the Overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah; ἡ νεπολινομένη εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα χρόνον, it shall never be inhabited, *Isa.* xlii. 20. Whether Sodom really underwent this Fate, or some Time after was rebuilt, is a Question, that has exercised the Learned. 'Tis certain, that in the *Notitia* express Mention is made of Sodom, as an episcopal City; and, among the Bishops of *Arabia*, there is found one *Soverus*, a Bishop of Sodom, who subscribed to the first Council of *Nice*: Mr *Rehnd* however cannot persuade himself, that this impious Place was ever rebuilt; and therefore he believes that the Word Sodom, which is read among the Subscriptions of that Council, must be a Fault of the Copiers. *Calmer's Dictionary*, on the Word Sodom.

(q) *Le Clerc's Commentary* in *Locum*.

(r) *Gen.* xviii. 22.

(s) *Ver.* 17.



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and instigating to him to be gone, (t) to make haste, and *escape to Zoar, because they could do nothing, until he was come thither*, are Arguments sufficiently convincing, that the Thunder and Lightning, or (u) others will have it) the Showers of liquid Fire, or rather (x) Storms of Nitre and Sulphur mingled with Fire, which fell upon these wicked Places, were immediately sent down by the Appointment of God, and by the Ministry of his Angels, who, knowing all the *Meteors* of the Air, and their repugnant Qualities, did collect, commix, and employ them, as they thought fit, in the Execution of God's just Judgment upon a People devoted to Destruction.

A moral Reflection from the whole.

THUS we have consider'd the Manner of the Destruction of the Cities of the Plain, how far natural Causes might be concern'd, and wherein the miraculous Hand of God did intervene. Whether a *Deluge* or a *Conflagration* be the more formidable Judgment of the two, we cannot tell; our Imaginations will hardly reach the Dreadfulness of either; and to enter into the Comparison, is a Task too shock-

ing. As the History however of those, who suffer'd these Punishments, is recorded in Scripture for our Admonition, (y) that *we should not lust after evil Things even as they lusted*; so the Apostle has set both their Examples before us, and laid it down for a sure Proposition, — That, (z) if *God spared not the old World, but brought in a Flood upon the Ungodly*, and if *he, turning the Cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into Ashes, condemn'd them with an Overthrow*, or (according to (a) St Jude) condemn'd them to the Vengeance of eternal Fire; we need not doubt, but that, as he is in all Ages the same, a God of Justice, as well as Mercy, no Iniquity can ultimately escape. For, though upon every Occasion, he does not lay bare his vindictive Arm; tho' (b) *he is strong and patient*, so that he seldom *whetteth his Sword*, and *prepareth the Instruments of Death*; yet a few of these remarkable, these monumental Instances of his Severity against Sin, are enough to convince us, that *he hath reserved the Unjust* (however they may escape now) *unto the Day of Judgment to be punish'd*.

From Gen.  
xx—xxv. 11.

(t) Gen. xix. 22.

(u) Howell's History.

(x) Patrick's Commentary.

(y) 1 Cor. x. 6.

(z) 2 Pet. ii. 5.

(a) Ver. 7.

(b) Psal. vii. 12, &c.





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xxv. 20. to  
Ch. xxviii. 8.



## CHAP. II.

*Of the Life of Isaac, from his Marriage to his Death.*

### *The HISTORY.*

*The Birth of  
Esau and  
Jacob.*

**I**SAAC was forty Years old, \* when he married *Rebekah*, the Daughter of *Bethuel*; but his Mother *Sarah's* Misfortune attended his Wife, viz. that she was without Issue for almost twenty Years together, till God at last was pleased to hear † his earnest Prayers, and grant him the Blessing, he so much long'd for. *Rebekah* however had not many Months conceived before the Struggles of the two Children (for she had *Twins*) in her Womb gave her such Pain and Uneasiness, that she

began, in a Manner, to wish herself not with Child again, and, when she went † to consult the Divine Oracle, what the meaning of this uncommon Conflict might be, she had it return'd for Answer, that the two Children, which she then bore, were to be the Heads of two different Nations, should long contest it for Superiority, but that, at length, the *Younger* should get the Dominion over the *Elder*.

R r r r

WHEN

\* How old *Rebekah* was, when she was married to *Isaac*, the Scripture does no where inform us; but the Conjectures of most of the *Jewish* Commentators make her to be extremely Young. The oldest, that they will allow her to be, is not above 14, which was a Thing hardly customary in those Days: And yet, considering her absolute Management of all Affairs, even when *Isaac* was alive, we cannot but suppose, that, altho' she liv'd not so long, she was a considerable deal younger than he. *Heidegger's Hist. Patriar. Vol. II. Exercit. 11.*

† The Word in the Original signifies to pray with Constancy, Vehemence, and Importunity: And the *Jews* hereupon have a traditional Explication, which is preserv'd in *Jonathan's Targum*, viz. that he carried his Wife to the Place of the Altar, upon Mount *Moriab*, where he himself was once bound to be sacrific'd, and there made a most solemn Invocation, by the Faith of his Father *Abraham*, and by the Oath of God, that she, tho' barren by Nature, might conceive by Virtue of the Covenant, and supernatural Blessing; and accordingly he prevail'd with God to grant him his Request. What we render for his Wife, may likewise signify in the Presence of his Wife; and so the Import of the Words will be, that, besides their more private Devotions, they did oftentimes, in a more solemn Manner, and with united Force, pray for the Mercy, wherein they were equally concern'd; nor could there be any Presumption in their thus petitioning, what, at present, was denied them, because they knew very well, that God's Purpose and Promise did not exclude, but rather require, the Use of all convenient Means, for their Accomplishment. *Pool's Annotations, and Bibliotheca Bibl. in Locum.*

† The most early, and common Method of Enquiring of the Lord, was, by going to some one of his Prophet's, and consulting him; but then the Question is, who the Prophet was, whom *Rebekah*, upon this Occasion, consulted? Some of the *Jewish* Doctors are of Opinion, that she went to the School, or Oratory of *Shem*, (whom they suppose then alive) or to some other Person, constituted by him, and call'd of God to that Ministration. Some *Christian* Commentators imagine, it was *Melchisedeck*, the Priest of the most high God, whom she consulted; but if it were any Priest, or Prophet, that then she applied to, her Father-in-law *Abraham*, who was certainly then alive, and is expressly call'd a Prophet, *Gen. xx. 7.* seems to have been the most proper Person, not only because he was highly interested in her Concerns, but had likewise the *Shechinah*, or divine Appearance (as most imagine) continually resident with him. But, as there was another Manner, besides that of answering by Prophets, customary in those Days, viz. by Dreams, and Visions, their Opinion seems to be most probable, who suppose, that *Rebekah* retir'd into some secret Place, and there, having poured out her Soul before God in ardent Prayers, receiv'd an Answer, not long after, either in a Dream, or Vision, by a Voice from Heaven, or by the Information of an Angel, sent for that Purpose. *Vid. Le Clerc's Commentary, Bibliotheca Bibl. in Locum, and Heidegger's Hist. Patriarch. Vol. II. Exercit. 11.*



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WHEN the appointed Time for their Birth was come, the Child, which *Rebekah* was first deliver'd of, was all cover'd over with red Hair, for which Reason his Parents † call'd him *Esau*; and the other came after him so very close, that he took hold of his Heel with his Hand, and was therefore called *Jacob*, to denote (what he afterwards prov'd) the *Supplanter* of his Brother; and as they advanced in Years, their Tempers and Occupations were quite different. *Esau* was a strong and active Person, who delighted much in Hunting, and thereby supplying his Father with Venison very frequently, won his particular Affection; while *Jacob*, who was of a more gentle and courteous Disposition, by staying at home in the Tent, and employing himself in Family-offices, became his Mother's Darling.

Jacob's Purchase of his Brother's Birth-Right.

ONE Day, when *Jacob* had made him some Lentil-pottage, *Esau*, returning from his Sport, quite spent with Hunger and Fatigue, was so taken with the Looks of it, that he earnestly desir'd his Brother † to let him eat with him: But his Brother, it seems, being well instructed by his Mother, refus'd to do it, unless he would make him an immediate Dedition of his *Birth-right*. *Esau*, considering to what a Multi-

tude of Dangers his Manner of Life, in encountering wild Beasts, did daily expose him, made no great Esteem of what *Jacob* requir'd; and *Jacob*, perceiving his Disposition to comply, (that he might have the *Right* more firmly convey'd to him) † propos'd his doing it by Way of Oath, which the other never scrupled, and, after the Bargain was made, fell to eating very greedily, never once reflecting on what a vile and scandalous Thing it needs must be, to sell his Birth-right, and † all the great Privileges thereunto belonging, for a *Mess of Pottage*.

IN *Abraham's* Time the Famine was so severe in *Canaan*, that he was forced to remove into *Egypt*; and, upon the same Account, his Son *Isaac* had now left his Habitation, near the Well *Labairai*, and was come as far as *Gerar*, † where *Abimelech*, at this Time, was King, in order to proceed in his Journey; but, while he was deliberating what to do, God admonish'd him in a Dream, not to go down into *Egypt*, but to tarry in the Country, where he then was; and, at the same Time, assur'd him, that he would not only secure him from the Danger of the Famine, but, in Performance of the Oath, which he had sworn to his Father *Abraham*, his faithful and

From Gen.  
xxv. 20. to  
Ch. xxviii. 8.

† The Meaning of the Word *Esau* is somewhat obscure, unless we derive it from *Hassab*, to make, or be perfect; because he was of a stronger Constitution, than ordinary Infants, as having Hair all over him, which is an Indication of Manhood, whereas other Children are born with Hair only on their Heads: And, as for *Jacob*, it is deriv'd from an *Hebrew* Word, which signifieth to supplant, and, by the Addition of the Letter *Jod*, one of the Formatives of Nouns, it denotes a *Supplanter*, or one, that taketh hold of, and trippeth up his Brother's Heels. *Pool's* Annotations, and *Universal History*, c. 7.

† *Lentils* were a Kind of Pulse, somewhat like our Vetches, or coarser Sort of Pease. *St Austin*, upon *Psalms* lxi. says, that these were *Egyptian* Lentils, which were in great Esteem, and very probably gave the Pottage a red Tincture.

† Some imagine, that *Esau* did not know what this Lentil-soup was, and therefore he only call'd it by its Colour, give me of that red, that same red; as it is in the *Hebrew*, for which Reason he was likewise call'd *Edom*, which signifies red: But there is no Occasion to suppose, that he was ignorant of what Lentils were, only his repeating the Word red, without adding the Name of a Thing, denoted his great Hunger, and Eagerness of Appetite, which was probably still more irritated by the Colour of the Soup. *Biblioth. Bib.*

† The Birth-right, or Right of Primogeniture, had many Privileges annex'd to it. The First-born was consecrated to the Lord, *Exod.* xxii. 29. had a double Portion of the Estate allotted him, *Deut.* xxi. 17. had a Dignity and Authority over his Brethren, *Gen.* xlix. 3. succeeded in the Government of the Family, or Kingdom, 2 *Chron.* xxi. 3. and (as some, with good Reason, imagine) succeeded to the Priesthood, or chief Government in Matters Ecclesiastical. He had a Right to challenge the particular Blessing of his dying Parent: He had the Covenant, which God made with *Abraham*, that from his Loins *Christ* should come, consign'd to him: And (what is more) these Prerogatives were not confin'd to his Person only, but descended to his latest Posterity, in Case they comported themselves so, as to deserve them. *Pool's* Annotations, and *Le Clerc's* Commentary.

† It is not unlikely, that this *Abimelech* might be the Son of that *Abimelech*, King of *Gerar*, with whom *Abraham* had formerly made a Covenant, supposing *Abimelech* to be here the proper Name of a Man: But it is much more probable, that, at this Time, it was a common Name for the Kings of the *Philistines*, as *Cæsar* was for the *Roman* Emperors, and *Pharaoh* for the Kings of *Egypt*.



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and obedient Servant, would cause his Family (to which he would give the whole Land of *Canaan* in Possession, and from which the *Messias*, the *Desire* of all Nations, shou'd descend) to multiply exceedingly.

Isaac's Denial  
of his Wife.

*ISAAC*, according to the Divine Direction, went no farther than *Gerar*; and here it was, that he fell into the same Weakness, that his Father had formerly done in the same Place, viz. his making his Wife pass for his Sister, for fear that some wicked Man or other might be tempted to destroy him, in order to enjoy her. But so it was, that the King, from his Window, observing some Familiarities pass between them, that did not so well comport with the Character of a Brother, sent for him immediately, and complain'd of his Diffimulation; charg'd him with being married, and (not unmindful, very probably, of what had befallen the Nation upon the Account of *Sarah*) with a Design of entailing *Guilt*, and therewith a Judgment of God upon his Subjects, in case any Attempt had been made upon her Virtue. Fear of Death, and the Desire of Self-preservation, were the only Apology, that *Isaac* made for his Conduct; which *Abimelech* was pleas'd to accept, and, accordingly, issued out an Edict, that none, upon Pain of Death, shou'd dare to offer any Injury, either to *Isaac*, or his Wife.

His leaving  
Gerar.

THE great Accession of Wealth however, wherewith God had blessed him,

during his Stay in *Gerar*, raised the Envy and Indignation of the *Philistines*; That very Year, wherein he thought of going down into *Egypt* for fear of the Famine, he sowed a Piece of Ground, and, to the great Surprize of his Neighbours, received † an hundred-fold Produce from it; so that *Abimelech*'s Subjects began all to malign him, and (to oblige him to depart the Country) fill'd up the Wells, which his Father's Servants had digged. Nay, the very King himself, to satisfy the Repentment of his People, desired of him to leave the City of *Gerar*, and to find him out another Habitation; for that, in his Opinion, ‡ he had improv'd his Fortune sufficiently, while he had been among them: So that, to secure himself, as well as make the King easy, he retired into the Valley of *Gerar*, where his Father had formerly fed his Cattle, and there began to open the Wells, (which his Father had caused to be dug, but the *Philistines* had filled up) and called them by their antient Names. But the People of the Country, thinking him too well situated there, quarrell'd with his Shepherds, took away their Wells, and put him to many Inconveniencies; so that, being quite tir'd with their repeated Insults, he removed farther from them, and went, and liv'd in the most distant Parts of their Country.

HERE it was that he dug another Well: And, meeting with no Opposition, called it *Rebboth*, i. e. *Room*, or *Enlargement*, because God had now delivered him from the

From Gen.  
xxv. 20. to  
Ch. xxviii. 8.

† This hundred-fold Increase in one Year was given by God unto *Isaac* for a Sign of his Purpose to fulfil the Covenant made with his Father, and lately renew'd to him; particularly for the Confirmation of the Truth and Reason of the Warning against his going down into *Egypt*, as he was inclin'd, according to the natural Prospect of Things. Such an Increase was, at this Time, a singular Blessing of God, after there had been a considerable Dearth, and the Soil perhaps, that afforded so large a Crop, not so rich; otherwise, we may learn from *Varro* [*de Re Rustica*, l. 1. c. 4.1.] that in *Syria*, near *Gadera*, and in *Africa*, about *Bizantium*, they reaped an hundred Bushels from one; nay *Bochart* [in *Canaan*, l. 1. c. 25.] shews, from several good Authors, that some Places in *Africa* are so very fruitful, that they produce two or three Hundred fold, which makes this Account of *Moses* far from being incredible. *Bibliotheca Bib.* and *Patrick's* Commentary.

‡ The Words of *Abimelech*, according to our Translation, are these, *Thou art much mightier than we*; but certainly he cou'd not mean that *Isaac* was more powerful, than the whole People of *Palestine*, or that he had a larger Family, or more numerous Attendance, than himself had, and consequently was in a Condition, if he had been so minded, to disturb the Government. This we can by no Means conceive to be possible; and therefore the Words in the Original [*signatxampta mimennu*] do not mean, *because thou art mightier than we*, but *because thou art increased, and multiplied from us, or by us*, i. e. thou hast got a great deal by us; while thou hast continu'd amongst us, thou hast made a great Accession to thy Substance, and we do not care to let thee get any more; so that the *Philistines* did not fear him, but envy him, they grudged that he shou'd get so much among them, and therefore desired him to absent their Country. *Shuckford's* Connection, Vol. II. l. 8.



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the Straits and Difficulties, he had lately been in, by Reason of a Scarceness of Water, and not long after settled his constant Abode at *Beersheba*; where he had no sooner arriv'd, but, that very Night, God appear'd to him in a Vision, promising him his Favour and Protection, and that he would bless him, and multiply his Seed, for his Servant *Abraham's* Sake: So that *Isaac*, intending to continue here, built him an Altar, and Place of religious Worship, and cleared out the Well, † which his Father had formerly dug.

His Treaty  
with Abime-  
lech.

NOR had he been long here, before *Abimelech*, conscious of the peculiar Manner, wherein God had blessed him, sensible of the ill Usage, he had received from his Subjects, and apprehensive perhaps, that, in Time, he might think of revenging the Injuries he had suffer'd, came, (attended with † the chief of his Nobility, and with the Captain-General of his Forces) either to renew the old League, which had formerly been made with his Father *Abraham*, or to enter into a new one.

'T WAS but proper that *Isaac*, upon this Occasion, shou'd, in some measure, resent the Indignities, that were offer'd him: And therefore, at first, he expostulates the Matter with them, and seems to wonder, why they came to visit him, whom they had, so lately, expell'd their Country. *Abimelech* made the best Excuse for their Behaviour, that the Nature of the Thing wou'd bear; told him, that he had all along receiv'd, that the Divine Favour attended him in all his Undertakings, and

that therefore he might not be thought to oppose God, he was come to renew the Covenant depending between his People, and *Abraham's* Posterity, and was ready to engage in the same Conditions, and Obligations.

THIS Speech, so full of Submission and Acknowledgments, soon pacified *Isaac*, who was naturally of a quiet and easy Disposition; so that, having entertained the King and his Attendants in a very respectful and generous Manner that Night, the next † Morning they confirmed the League, with the usual Ceremonies; and *Abimelech* took Leave, and returned home: But, before he departed, *Isaac's* Servants brought him Word, that, in the Well, which they had been clearing out, and which *Abraham*, in former Times, had bought of the King of *Gerar*, they had happily found a Spring of Water; for which Reason, in the Hearing of *Abimelech*, and all the Company, he called it again by the Name of *Beersheba*, the Well of the Oath, "i. e. the Well, wherein " Water was discover'd, on the Day, " that *Abimelech* and I enter'd into a " Treaty of Peace, and ratified the same " with the Solemnity of Oaths."

BY this Time *Isaac's* two Sons were arrived at the Age of forty; and *Esau*, who had contracted an Acquaintance with the People of the Land, had married two Wives, *Judith*, the Daughter of *Beeri*, and *Bethshemath*, the Daughter of *Elon*, both *Hittites*, which was no small Affliction to his Parents. This, in a Manner, quite

From Gen.  
xxv. 20. to  
Ch. xxviii. 8.

† The Reasons, that induced *Isaac* to open the old Wells, rather than dig new ones, might be, 1. Because he was sure to find a Spring there, which he cou'd not be certain of in other Places; 2. Because it was easier, and less liable to Censure and Envy; 3. Because he had a Right to them, as they were his Father's Purchase and Property; and, 4. Because he was minded to preserve, and do Honour to his Father's Memory, for which Reason he call'd them by the same Names, that his Father had done before him. *Bibliotheca Bib. in Locum.*

† The two that are mention'd here are *Phicol* and *Abazzab*. *Phicol* is of the same Name, and bore the same Office, which he had, who is mention'd Ch. xxi. 22. but we must not suppose, that he was the same Man, any more, than *Abimelech* was the same King. The Word properly signifies *Face* or *Head*, and as the Captain-General is Head of the Forces he commands, so some have imagin'd that it is the appellative Name, (like that of *Tribunus*, or *Dictator* among the *Romans*) for every one among them that were advanced to that Dignity: And in like Manner, though the *Septuagint* seem to make *Abazzab* a proper Name, and call him the Para-nymph, or *Bride-man*, to *Abimelech*, which was always accounted a Post of the first Honour; yet I should rather chuse, with *Onkelas*, to make the Word signify a *Train*, or great Number of Nobility, which came in Attendance on *Abimelech*, and to do the Patriarch the greater Honour upon this Occasion. *Le Clerc's Commentary*, and *Howel's History*.

† The Articles were agreed upon over Night, and, by a mutual Oath, ratified in the Morning: And the Reason, why Men took publick Oaths in the Morning fasting, seems to have been *ob Reverentiam Juramenti*, as the *Jews* call it, because they looked upon them as very solemn and sacred Things. *Bibliotheca Bib.*



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quite alienated his Mother's Heart from him; but, as for his Father, his Affections continued the same. And therefore, finding himself grow old and feeble, and his Eyes quite dim with Age, and apprehending his Death to be nearer, than really it was, he call'd him one Day, and declared to him his Purpose of giving him his *paternal Benediction*, before he died; but wish'd him withal to take his hunting Instruments, and go into the Fields, and kill him a little Venison, and dress it to his Palate, that, when he had eaten thereof, and refreshed Nature, he might bless him with a more tender Affection, as well as a more becoming *Pathos*.

*His blessing of Jacob instead of Esau.*

*REBEKAH* overheard all this Discourse, and, as soon as *Esau* was well gone, she called *Jacob*, and acquainted him with what was transacting; that his Father was going to bestow a Benediction, which was final and irrevocable, upon his Brother; but that, if he wou'd listen to her, and do what she ordered him, she had an Expedient, by substituting him in his Room, to turn aside the Blessing, where she desir'd it. *Jacob* was willing enough to comply with his Mother's Request; but, if he was to *personate* his Brother, the difference of his Skin and Voice made him apprehensive, that his Father might discover the Imposture, and thereupon be provok'd, instead of his Prayers and best Wishes, to load him with Imprecations: But so confident was his Mother of Success in this Matter, that she took all the *Curses upon herself*, and encourag'd him to follow her Directions. Hereupon *Jacob* hasten'd to

the Fold, and brought two fat Kids from thence, which his Mother immediately took, and dress'd the choice Pieces of them with savoury Sauce, like Venison; and so, having cover'd his Neck and his Hands with the Skins of the Kids, and † array'd him with *Esau's* best Robes, she sent him in trembling with the Dish to his Father.

HIS Father was lying upon the Bed, when *Jacob* enter'd the Room, and, upon his demanding *who he was*, he roundly answer'd, that he was his elder Son *Esau*, who had brought him some Venison to eat. Surpris'd at the great Expedition, he had made, and not knowing indeed what to think, the old Man put several Times the Question to him, whether he was, in reality, his Son *Esau* or no; to which he as often answer'd in the Affirmative, and desir'd him, in short, to arise, and taste of what he had prepar'd for him, since God, who knew his Zeal to obey his Father, had brought it into his Hands much sooner, than he could otherwise have expected.

THE Difference between *Jacob's* and *Esau's* Voice was so remarkable, that *Isaac* cou'd not but suspect some Delusion in the Case; and therefore he desir'd him to draw nearer, that he might be the better satisfied; and when he had felt the hairy Skin on his Hands and Neck, he own'd that *the Hands were the Hands of Esau, tho' the Voice was the Voice of Jacob*.

THUS satisfied, or rather thus deluded, he arose, and eat heartily of his Son's pretended Venison; and, as soon as he had din'd, and drank \* a Cup or two of Wine,

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† The *Jews* have a Fancy, that it was the Robe of *Adam*, which had been transmitted down, from Father to Son, in the *Line of Blessing* (as they call it) till it came to *Abraham*, who left it to *Isaac*, and he, designing *Esau*, as his eldest, for his Successor, gave it to him. Some of them imagine, that this was a *sacerdotal* Habit, wherein *Esau*, in his Father's Illness, was suppos'd to officiate, and for this Reason it might be kept in *Isaac's* Tent, near to which, very likely, was the Place of religious Worship. In all Probability it was a Vestment of some Distinction, which the Heir of the Family, upon some solemn Occasions, was us'd to put on, and *Jacob*, at this Time, being to personate his Brother, there was a Necessity for him to have it: But how his Mother should come by it, or why she should have the keeping of it, when *Esau* had Wives of his own, is a Question that *Musculus* raises, and then answers it by saying, — That, because *Esau* had married these Wives without the Consent of his Parents, especially his Mother, she, for this Reason, refus'd to give it him, and perhaps reserv'd it for this very Occasion. But, in my Opinion, there seems to be no Necessity for this Supposition, since it was sufficient for her Purpose, that she knew where it was in *Esau's* Apartment. *Bibliotheca Bib. in Locum.*

\* There is a Tradition among the *Jews*, that *Jacob* having omitted to bring Wine for his Father, an Angel prepar'd it, and brought it into his Apartment; that he gave it into *Jacob's* Hands, and *Jacob* pour'd it out for his Father.

From Gen.  
xxv. 26. to  
Ch. xxviii. 8.



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2148, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1856, &c.

he bid him draw near, that he might now bestow upon him his promis'd Blessing. The Smell of *Jacob's* Garments contributed not a little to *Isaac's* Chearfulness. He smelt and prais'd them: In a Kind of Extasy of Pleasure, he embraced and kiss'd his pretended *First-born*; and, after having \* wished him all heavenly and earthly Blessings, he at length dismiss'd him.

*JACOB* was scarce got out of the Tent, when *Esau*, having returned from Hunting, and just made ready his Venison, came, and invited his Father in the same dutiful Manner, that his Brother had done. Surpris'd at this Address, his Father ask'd, *who he was*; and, when he understood that it was his elder Son *Esau*, he was quite in a Maze, and began to enquire, who, and where, that Person was, who had been there before, and taken away the Blessing, which he neither cou'd nor wou'd revoke. *Esau*, too well perceiving that it must have been *Jacob*, who had thus supplanted him, complains of his double Perfidy; first, in extorting his Birthright

from him, and now in robbing him of his Father's Blessing; and then seems to wonder very much, that his Father's Store should be so far exhausted, as (since he would not revoke the other) not to have reserved one Blessing for him.

*ISAAC* was willing enough to gratify his Son's Request, and it grieved him, no doubt, to hear his bitter Lamentations; but what could he do? all the choicest of his Blessings he had bestow'd upon *Jacob*, and as they were gone, he could not recall them. However, that he might, in some measure, pacify *Esau*, by the same prophetic Spirit he acquaints him, "That, tho'  $\ddagger$  his Posterity should not enjoy a very plentiful Country, yet they should become a great People, and mighty Warriors, who should live by the Dint of their Sword; and tho' they should sometimes become subject to the Descendants of *Jacob*, yet, in Process of Time, they would  $\ddagger$  shake off their Yoke, and erect a Dominion of their own."

From Gen.  
xxv. 20. to  
Ch. xxviii. 8.

### E S A U

Father; that the Wine was the same with the *Wine of Paradise*, which had been laid up from the Beginning; and that his Father, having drank of it, kiss'd him, and blessed him, as one now filled with the Spirit, even with the Spirit of Prophecy and Blessing: But the Custom of the *Jewish* Doctors is to magnify every little Matter.

\* The Prayer, which *Josephus* makes *Isaac* offer up to God upon this Occasion, is in Words to this Effect. "Eternal God, the Creator of all Things, that are made; thou, that hast been so gracious and bountiful to my Father, to myself, and to our Offspring, promising, and possessing us of all Things, and giving us Assurances of greater Blessings to come: Lord, make thy Words good to us by Effects, and do not despise thy Servant for his present Infirmities, which make him the more sensible of his Need of thy Support. Preserve this Child from all Evil, in thy Mercy and infinite Goodness: Give him a long and an happy Life: Bless him with all worldly Enjoyments, that may be for his Good; and make him a Terror to his Enemies, and an Honour and Comfort to his Friends. Antiq. l. i. c. 18.

$\ddagger$  The Words in our Translation carry a Sense quite different to what we have here suggested; *Behold thy Dwelling shall be of the Fatness of the Earth, and of the Dew of Heaven*. But, besides that this makes the Blessing the same with that, which was given to *Jacob*, Ver. 28. which *Isaac* professes himself incapable of doing; 'tis manifest, that *Idumaea*, where the Descendants of *Esau* dwelt, was far from being a fat and fruitful Country. Had it been so, there had not been that Reason for the subsequent Words, *by thy Sword thou shalt live*; for a rich and plentiful Country would have secured them from living by Spoil and Plunder, as it is manifest the People of that Country did, if we can credit the Character which *Josephus*, both in his History of the Antiquities, l. 13. and of the Wars of the *Jews*, l. 4. gives us of them. *Le Clerc's* Commentary, and Universal History.

$\ddagger$  The *Edomites*, or *Idumeans*, who were the Posterity of *Esau*, for a considerable Time, were a People of much more Power and Authority, than the *Israelites*, till, in the Days of *David*, they were entirely conquered, 2 Sam. viii. 14. they were thereupon govern'd by Deputies or Viceroy, appointed by the Kings of *Judah*; and, whenever they attempted to rebel, were, for a long Time, crushed, and kept under by the *Jews*. In the Days of *Jehoram*, the Son of *Jehoshaphat*, they expell'd their Viceroy, and set up a King of their own, 2 Kings viii. 20. and though they were reduc'd at that Time, yet, for some Generations after this, they seem'd to have liv'd independent on the *Jews*, and when the *Babylonians* invaded *Judaea*, they not only took Part with them, but violently oppress'd them, even when the Enemy was withdrawn, so that, remembering what they had suffered under *Joab*, in the Days of *David*, they entered into the like cruel Measures against the *Jews*, and threatened to lay *Jerusalem* level with the Ground. Their Animosity against the Posterity of *Jacob* seems indeed to be hereditary; nor did they ever cease, for any considerable Time, from Broils and Contentions, until they were conquered by *Hircanus*, and reduced to the Necessity of embracing the *Jewish* Religion, or quitting their Country: Hereupon, consenting to the former they were incorporated with the *Jews*, and became one Nation, so that, in the first Century after Christ, the Name of *Idumean* was lost, and quite diffus'd. *Le Clerc's* Commentary, and Universal History, l. i. c. 4.



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2148, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1856, &c.  
His being sent  
into Mesopo-  
tania.

*ESAU* was now become so sensible of what he had lost by the Frauds and Deceptions of his Brother, that he was resolv'd, at a proper Season, to be reveng'd of him. His Regard to his Father would not permit him to express his Resentment in any violent Act, as yet; but, as he supposed, that he could not live long, he was determined to kill his Brother, as soon as his Father was dead. Some Speeches of this Kind had accidentally dropped from him, which were brought to his Mother's Ears. Whereupon she acquainted her favourite Son with the bloody Design, his Brother had conceived against him; told him, that the wisest Way would be for him to withdraw some where, until his Fury was asswaged, and the properest Place for that Purpose would be his Uncle *Laban's*, in *Mesopotamia*; that thither he might retire a little while; and, as soon as his Brother's Passion was over, she would not fail to re-call him; that, to part with him indeed was no small Affliction to her, but nothing comparable to the Misery, that would ensue, if, in one Day, she should be bereaved of them both; of him, by the Hands of his Brother; and of his Brother, by the Hand of Justice.

Jacob's De-  
parture to Me-  
sopotamia.

*JACOB*, who was of a mild, if not a timorous Temper, readily complied with his Mother's Proposal, but then his Father's Consent was to be had; and this *Rebekah* undertook to obtain by artful Insinuations to her Husband, that *Esau's Hittite* Wives were a perpetual Grief and Trouble to her; that the whole Comfort of her Life would be lost, if *Jacob* should chance to marry

in the like unhappy Manner; and therefore, to prevent this Disaster, she thought it not amiss (if she might but have his Approbation therein) that he should go to her Brother *Laban's* in *Mesopotamia*, and there see, if he could fancy any one of his Daughters for a Wife.

*ISAAC* was unacquainted with the main Drift of her Discourse; but, being himself a pious Man, and knowing that the Promise, made to *Abraham*, and renewed in him, was to be compleated in the Issue of *Jacob*, called him to him, and upon his Blessing, gave him a strict Charge not to marry with any *Canaanitish* Woman, but to go to *Padan-Aram*, to the House of his Uncle *Laban*, and there provide himself with a Wife: Which if he did, "God wou'd bless him, *he said*, and "raise him up a numerous Posterity, and "give that Posterity the Possession of that "very Country, where now they were no "more than Sojourners, according to the "Promise, which he had made to his "Grandfather *Abraham*."

WITH these Words he dismissed *Jacob* to go to his Uncle's in *Mesopotamia*: And of the Patriarch *Isaac* we read no more, only that he was alive at his Son's Return, and lived three and twenty Years longer still; that he had removed from *Beersheba*, where his Son left him, and dwelt now at *Mamre*, not far from *Hebron*; where, at the Age of 188 Years, he died, and was buried, in the same Sepulchre with his Father *Abraham*, by his two Sons, *Esau* and *Jacob*.

From Gen.  
xxv. 20. to  
Ch. xxviii. 8.

## The OBJECTION.

" **O**F all the Promises, that God made  
" unto the Patriarchs, none is so  
" frequently repeated, as that of a *plenteous*  
" Issue; and yet, if we look into the  
" History, we shall find, that no Men's  
" Wives were so frequently barren as  
" theirs. *Sarah* had surpassed the ordinary  
" Term of Conception above thirty Years,

" *Rebekah* had been married almost twen-  
" ty, and *Rachel* full as long, before any  
" of them had a Child; and yet God, all  
" along, promises their Husbands an innu-  
" merable Offspring, which can hardly be  
" accounted for, unless we can suppose,  
" that Barrenness and Fruitfulness are  
" compatible, and that to close up the  
" Wife's



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“ Wife’s *Womb* is the readiest Way to  
“ make the Man’s *Seed like the Stars in*  
“ *Heaven for Multitude.*

“ BUT, after all these large Promises,  
“ *Isaac*, we read, had but two Sons; and  
“ yet (what is more surprizing in the  
“ divine Conduct) the Younger of these  
“ was not only (a) preferred before the  
“ Elder, quite contrary to the established  
“ Right of *Primogeniture*; but (as (b) the  
“ Scripture expresses it) *God loved Jacob*,  
“ *and hated Esau*, (c) *even when the Chil-*  
“ *dren, being yet unborn, had neither done*  
“ *good nor evil*, which is a manifest In-  
“ stance of God’s *Partiality*, and no small  
“ Argument for the Doctrine of Predesti-  
“ nation: And, yet if we enquire into the  
“ Character of this *Child of Promise* (as  
“ he is call’d) we shall find that his Beha-  
“ viour did hardly deserve so particular a  
“ Favour.

“ FOR, what Apology can we make  
“ for his taking the Advantage of his  
“ Brother’s Hunger, and thence over-  
“ reaching him in the Matter of his *Birth-*  
“ *right*? There is something so inhu-  
“ man in denying an hungry Person a little  
“ Victuals; something so selfish, in expect-  
“ ing an exorbitant Price from one’s own  
“ Brother, for a Mefs of Pottage; some-  
“ thing so crafty and designing, in bring-  
“ ing an eager Appetite under the Obliga-  
“ tion of an Oath, that *Jacob* seems to  
“ have acted the mere *Sharper* in this whole  
“ Affair; nor (d) can *Esau*’s supine Negli-  
“ gence, in giving up the Privilege, be  
“ reputed near so culpable, as the other’s  
“ covetous, unlawful Method of obtaining  
“ it.

“ AND, if we cannot excuse him in  
“ this, what shall we say for his fraudulent  
“ Practice in intercepting his Father’s  
“ Blessing; in averting himself to be the  
“ Person he was not; in telling a Multi-  
“ tude of positive Lyes; in listening to the  
“ Instigation of a crafty Woman, his Mo-  
“ ther; in imposing upon the Blindness

“ and Infirmity of his aged Father; and  
“ in making even God himself a Party to  
“ the Fraud? For so he confidently tells  
“ his Father, (e) *the Lord thy God hath*  
“ *brought the Venison to me.* And, if we  
“ cannot acquit the Son, who acted only  
“ in Subordination, what shall we say  
“ for the Mother herself, who was the  
“ prime Author or Contriver of the whole  
“ Plot?

“ CONSTANT Conversation and a  
“ Similitude of Features, Temper, or  
“ Manners, may be allow’d to engage a  
“ Mother’s Affections more towards one  
“ Child, than another; but certainly that  
“ Parent is justly to be censur’d, who  
“ trains up her Child in any, the least,  
“ Wickedness, for the Acquisition even  
“ of the greatest Good; and that Child  
“ is liable to the divine Malediction, (f)  
“ *who deceiveth* his Neighbour, much  
“ more his Father, and (g) *maketh the*  
“ *Blind to go out of his Way.*

“ THE Truth is, *Rebekah*, in her whole  
“ Conduct, appears to be a Woman of  
“ Craft and Intrigue; dextrous in con-  
“ triving, and bold in executing any  
“ Means, to accomplish her Design. She  
“ had a peculiar Art in imposing upon  
“ her Husband, by concealing her real  
“ Sentiments (as she did in the Case of  
“ sending away *Jacob*) and fobbing him  
“ off with a cunningly devis’d Tale: And,  
“ as to her Husband, whatever Boast may  
“ be made of his *Greatness*, (b) even to  
“ outvie the Wealth and Power of Kings;  
“ (i) yet *Jacob*’s being sent away to *Me-*  
“ *sopotamia*, all alone, and without any  
“ Servant to attend him in so long a  
“ Journey; *Esau*’s finding no kind of  
“ Eatables in his Father’s House, when  
“ he returned from hunting, so that (k)  
“ he was ready, in a Manner, to be  
“ famish’d to death; *himself* being glad of  
“ a Piece of Venison, whenever his Son  
“ *Esau* cou’d catch it, and for that Rea-  
“ son (l) *loving him* more than he did  
“ his

From Gen.  
xxv. 20. to  
Ch. xxviii. 8.

(a) Gen. xxv. 23. (b) Mal. i. 2, 3. (c) Rom. ix. 11, &c. (d) *Le Clerc’s Commentary.*  
(e) Gen. xxvii. 20. (f) Mal. i. 14. (g) Deut. xxvii. 18. (h) Gen. xxvi. 13, 16. (i) Chap.  
xxviii. 7. (j) Chap. xxv. 32. (k) Chap. xxv. 28.



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Ant. Christ.  
1856, &c.

“ his Brother; and the great Rout and  
“ Bustle, that we find him so frequently  
“ making about a *Well*, that his Father  
“ had dug, and therefore he thought it  
“ his own Property, are manifest Tokens;  
“ that his Circumstances, at this Time,  
“ were but strait, and that (m) *his Possession of Flocks, and Possession of Herds, and great Store of Servants, &c.* might  
“ be design'd to give an *Heightening* to  
“ his Character, but do not appear to be  
“ *Matters of Fact.*”

Answer'd by  
showing why  
the Patriarchs  
Wives were,  
for some Time,  
barren.

NOTHING can be more obvious, than that the Promises, which God was pleas'd to make to the Patriarchs, were not to be accomplish'd in their *Persons*, but in their *Posterity*. Abraham had but one Son by his *primary* Wife, and Isaac but two; and therefore the Blessing of a *numerous Offspring* could not be verified in them; but in *Jacob* it began to operate. He had twelve Sons; and these, when in *Egypt* (notwithstanding all Lets and Impediments to the contrary) mightily increas'd; and, upon their Return from thence, made up an Army sufficient to expel the old Inhabitants, and to take Possession of the *Land of Promise*, for thus it is that *Moses* bespeaks the People: (n) *Tby Fathers went down into Egypt, with threescore and ten Persons, and now the Lord thy God has made thee as the Stars of Heaven for Multitude*; wherein he alludes to the very Words, in which the Promise, the *original* Promise, was made.

If then the numerous Posterity, where-with God blessed the *Jewish* Patriarchs, did, in a due Course of Years, tho' not *immediately* ensue, there is no Foundation for our calling in Question his Truth and Veracity; but then his Wisdom, and Almighty Power are much more conspicuous in raising so large an Increase from so small a Beginning. For, besides that the long Sterility of these holy Matrons gave a proper Occasion for the Exercise of Faith, and Patience, and Reliance on God, (o) it tended not a little to illustrate the Nobility of the *Jewish* Extraction, when it

came to be considered, that their Progenitors were descended from Women, that were *complexionally* unfruitful, and brought into the World at no less an Expence, than that of a Miracle. It shewed plainly, that the Multiplication of the *promis'd Seed* was not effected by any natural Succession, but by the divine Favour and Benediction. It prepar'd the Way for the Coming of the Son of God in the Flesh, and, as St *Chrysostom* (p) expresses it, pre-dispos'd the World to the Belief of the miraculous *Conception* of the *Virgin Mary*. It administer'd Comfort to such married Women, as were childless, giving them Encouragement still to hope on, and restraining them from murmuring, or being impatient at any Retardation; and therefore we find the Angel, in his Address to the blessed Virgin, (both to enforce the Credibility of the Message, he brought her, and to revive the Hope of such, as were destitute of Children) expressing himself in this Manner; (q) *Behold thy Cousin Elizabeth, who was called barren, she also hath conceived a Son in her old Age, for with God nothing shall be impossible*: And 'tis a glorious Demonstration of the sovereign Power of God, when (according to the Apostle's Manner of Expression) (r) *he chuses the weak Things of the World to confound the Things that are mighty, the base Things of the World, and the Things that are despised, yea, and the Things that are not, to bring to nought the Things that are, that no Flesh should glory in his Presence.*

THE same Apostle, in Relation to the Subject we are now upon, has, by a familiar Similitude, evinc'd the Right, which the great Ruler of the World has to make a Discrimination (as to the *Temporalities* I mean only) between Man and Man: For *bath not the Potter Power over the Clay, says he, of the same Lump, to make one Vessel unto Honour, and another unto Dishonour?* He, who has a

From Gen.  
xxv. 20. to  
Ch. xxviii. 8.

The Meaning  
of God's pre-  
ferring Jacob,  
before Esau.

T t t t

present

(m) Gen. xxvi. 14.  
Gen. Chap. xlix.

(n) Deut. x. 22.  
(q) Luke i. 36, 37.

(o) Heidegger's Hist. Patriar. Vol. II. Exercit. 8.  
(r) 1 Cor. i. 27, &c.

(p) In



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2148, &c.  
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1856, &c.

present Intuition of all Things future, knows, how every Person, when born into the World, will comport himself, and therefore, as he has the Right, so he is the only Being, that is duly qualified to allot Men their different Stations in Life; but it is their different Stations in *this* Life, that God thus determines, and not any Necessity either of their happy or unhappy Condition in the next.

*E S A U* and *Jacob* were both in the Womb, when God thought fit to declare his Choice of the one, rather than the other, to be the Founder of the *Jewish* Nation, and of *whom*, according to the *Flesh*, *Christ* should come: And, as this was a Favour of a temporary Consideration only, and no ways affected their eternal State, I know of no one Attribute of God that cou'd restrain him in this Option. *Loving* or *hating* are Terms of a strong Signification sometimes, but, that here they can mean no more than a bare Preference of one before another, is plain from the whole Tenour of the Apostle's Discourse. The Truth is, (s) his Words (as well as those of *Moses*) relate (as we said before) not to the *Persons*, but to the *Posterity* of *Jacob* and *Esau*, or not to them *personally*, but *nationally* consider'd. As to their *Persons*, it was never true, that the *Elder* did *serve* the *Younger*, but only as to their *Posterity*, when the (t) *Edomites* became *tributary* to *David*: And therefore the Apostle cannot be suppos'd here to discourse of any personal Election to eternal Life, or any absolute Love or Hatred of these two Brothers, with Respect to their Interest in another World, but only of the Election of one Seed, or Nation, before another, to be accounted and treated as the *Seed* of *Abraham*, which is all that the Apostle's Argument drives at.

In a Word, the Case of these two Patriarchs has nothing to do with the *Election* or *Reprobation* of particular Persons. It shews us indeed, that God may make Choice of one Nation, rather than another,

to be his *peculiar People*; but to apply <sup>From Gen. xxv. 20. to Ch. xxviii. 8.</sup> this to particular Persons, or to suppose that the Condition of Men's Souls, even before they come into the World, is determined by a fatal and irrevocable *Decree*, is foreign to the Apostle's Meaning, and abhorrent to his Word, who has so plainly declared himself to be (u) *no Respector of Persons*, but, that in every Nation, *he that feareth God, and worketh Righteousness, shall be accepted with him.*

(x) SOME are of Opinion, that the chief <sup>The Birth-right what.</sup> Prerogative of the *Primogeniture* was nothing else, but a double Portion of the Father's Estate, and that this was all that *Esau* parted with to his Brother: But had this been so, we cannot see wherein he was so mightily to blame, or why the Apostle, who certainly understood the Meaning of the *Birth-right*, as well as any modern Commentator, should give him the hard Name of a *profane Person*, merely for selling the Reversion of a temporal Estate, to save his Life, in a Time of the greatest Exigence. Had the Birth-right, I say, consisted chiefly in this, we cannot see how *Jacob* could have been reduced to the Straits, we afterwards find him in, or *Esau*, as to his outward Fortune, have flourish'd more prosperously, than his Brother did. When his Father *Isaac* died, and he came from Mount *Seir*, to assist in his Funeral, upon his Departure from his Brother, he is said to have (y) *carried away with him all the Substance, which he had got in the Land of Canaan.* (z) Now it is plain, that he had no Substance in the Land of *Canaan* of his own getting, for he liv'd at *Seir*, in the Land of *Edom*, beyond the Borders of *Canaan*; and therefore the Substance, which was gotten in the *Land of Canaan*, must be the Substance, which *Isaac* died possessed of, and which *Esau*, as his Heir, took along with him. So that, after the Birth-right was sold, He was still Heir to his Father's Substance; and therefore a Right to this was not the Thing, which *Jacob* purchas'd of

(s) *Hilary* on Rom. ix. xxxvi. 6.

(t) 2 Sam. viii. 14.

(u) *Skuckford's Connection*, Vol. I. l. 7.

(v) Acts x. 34, 35.

(x) *Bibliotheca Bib.*

(y) Gen.



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Ant. Christ.  
1856, &c.

From Gen  
xxv. 20. to  
Ch. xxviii. 8.

Jacob censur'd.

of him. Others are of Opinion, that the Birth-right was the Blessing, promised to the Seed of *Abraham*, and this the Author of the Epistle to the *Hebrews* seems, in some measure, to favour; *Lest there be any Fornicator, or profane Person, as Esau, who for a Morsel of Meat sold his Birth-right. For ye know how that afterwards, when he would have inherited the Blessing, he was rejected*: Where the not inheriting the Blessing, seems to be connected with his having sold his Birth-right; as if, having parted with the one, he could not possibly obtain the other: But it is much to be question'd, whether this be the true Sense of the Passage. *Esau* himself, when he sold his Birth-right, did not imagine that he had sold, at the same Time, his Right to the Blessing; for when his Father told him, that his Brother had come with Subtilty, and taken away the Blessing, his Answer is, *Is he not rightly named Jacob, for he hath supplanted me these two Times; he took away my Birth-right, and behold now he hath taken away my Blessing?* Had he apprehended that the Blessing, and Birth-right were Things inseparable, having sold the one, he would never have laid any Claim to the other; whereas the defrauding him of his Blessing is another Hardship he complains of, distinct, and different, and independent on the former: And therefore *Esau's* Birth-right was most probably his Right of being Priest, or Sacrificer for his Brethren; and for parting with this he is justly termed *profane*, because he

hereby shew'd himself not to have a due Value and Esteem for the religious Employment, that belong'd to him. — But tho' this Employment might better comport with *Jacob*, yet we cannot pretend to justify him in his Method of obtaining it. (a) *Moses*, who records the Story, does not commend him for it, and therefore we are left at our Liberty to pass what Censure upon it we think reasonable. God indeed, before he was born, design'd and promis'd this Privilege to him; but (b) then he should have waited, until the divine Wisdom had found out the Means of executing his Promise, in his own Way, as *David* did, till God gave him Possession of *Saul's* Kingdom, and not have anticipated God, and snatch'd it by an irregular Act of his own. In the whole Affair indeed, *Jacob* acted with a Subtilty, not at all becoming an honest Man. He knew that Delays were dangerous, and that his Brother's Consideration, or second Thoughts, might possibly spoil his Bargain; and therefore he requir'd Haste, both in the Sale, and in his Oath, and thereby incurr'd another Sin, in hurrying his Brother into an Oath by Precipitation, which he neither should have taken, nor *Jacob* have advis'd him to take, without mature Advice, and Deliberation.

AND, in like Manner, as to his Interception of the Blessing, which his Father design'd for his Brother *Esau*; it is in vain to have recourse to † forc'd Constructions, or to plead the Lawfulness of mental Reservations,

(a) *Bedford's* Scripture Chronology.

(b) *Pool's* Annotations.

† Upon *Jacob's* answering his Father, that he was *Esau his First-Born*, the *Rabbins* are put to great Perplexity, how to absolve the Patriarch from the Sin of Lying; and therefore some of them paraphrase the Words, thus, — *I am, i. e. he, who brings thee something to eat, but Esau is thy eldest Son*; while others understand them in this Manner rather; *I am Esau, i. e. I am in his Stead, because he has sold me his Birth-right*: For, by this Sale, as they tell us, a proper Permutation being made of Persons and Titles, the first became really last, and the last first, the Elder became the Younger, and the Younger the Elder, as to the Stile, and all the Privileges of *Eldership*; so that *Jacob* was, in reality, as much the Heir, and Successor of *Isaac*, as if *Esau* had been actually dead. And, tho' *Esau* was still alive, and had the Name of *Esau*, yet *Jacob* was properly (what his Brother had been) his First-born *Esau*, since *Esau* was reduc'd to the Station of a younger Brother only. *St Austin* [ad Consentium de Mendacio, c. 10.] pretends, that *Jacob's* Words have a Figure in them, much in the same Nature with that in the Gospel, where *John* the Baptist is called the *Elias, that shall come*; but the Misfortune is, that there was a great Similitude between *Elias* and the Baptist, as to their Spirit and Office, but between *Jacob* and *Esau* there was none at all; and therefore some other Fathers, seeing the Impossibility of explaining the Words, by any of these Subterfuges, have boldly asserted, that there was no Iniquity in the Lyes, which *Jacob* told, because they did not proceed from any malevolent Intent, but from a Design of promoting the greatest Good; for which End it was as lawful for a wise Man to employ officious Lyes, as it is to make use of Physicks for the Preservation of Health: And, from such dangerous Positions as these,



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*Reservations*, in order to excuse him in the Lying and Dissimulation, wherein he was certainly culpable : The best Way is, upon this Occasion, to lament the Infirmary of human Nature, which cannot always stand upright, and to admire the Impartiality of the sacred Writings, in which the very Blemishes and Transgressions of such, as are design'd to make the *top Figure* therein, are not forgotten to be recorded.

Wherein he  
was commend-  
able.

(c) It cannot be denied indeed, but that both *Jacob* and his Mother were justly to be prais'd, for having a due Esteem of the *paternal* Benediction, and for their endeavouring to attain it ; since this cou'd proceed from no other Motive, than a full Persuasion of the Truth of God's Promises and Covenant with *Abraham*. For, as the *paternal* Blessing was thought to be a Means, instituted by God, for the Conveyance of this Covenant, it cou'd not but deserve their Care and Affiduity. It cannot be denied farther, but that, if this Blessing was (as some imagine) an *Appendage* to the Birth-right, *Jacob*, in purchasing the one, had acquir'd a lawful Title to the other, a Title establish'd not only upon the express Designation of God, but by a *Deed of Sale* likewise, executed and ratified by a most solemn and sacred Oath. It cannot be denied likewise, but that, pursuant to this divine Designation, *Isaac* was obliged to have conferr'd his Blessing upon *Jacob*, and therefore his Wife, perceiving that he was going to promise the *Blessing of Abraham*, where his Affection led him to wish it, and not where she knew that God had design'd to bestow it, laid a Scheme, which induced her Husband to do that *unwittingly*, which God had pre-ordained was to be done, but what, she knew, her Husband would not

do *knowingly* without some Uneasiness. Nay, it cannot be denied, once more, but that, (d) when her Artifice had succeeded, and *Jacob* was accordingly blessed, *Isaac* was so far from being displeas'd with his Wife, or angry with *Jacob* for imposing upon him, that we find him fully satisfy'd in what he had done ; (e) *I have blessed him*, says he, *yea, and he shall be blessed* : Which sudden Change of Mind can be imputed to nothing else, but some divine *Inspiration*, which, at that Time, open'd his Understanding, and convinced him, that he had given the Blessing to the right Person.

From Gen.  
xxv. 20. to  
Ch. xxviii. 8.

Thus from the Consideration of *Jacob's* Right, and *Isaac's* Duty, the Goodness of the End, the Pre-ordination of God, and his Approbation of the Thing, when done, may be drawn some Arguments, to alleviate their Crime ; but still we must ingenuously own, (f) that *Rebekah* was guilty of a Fault, in suggesting such dangerous Advice to her Son ; that *Jacob* committed another, in suffering himself to be seduced by so bad a Guide ; and that both of them presum'd to limit the Power of God, by thinking that a Complication of Frauds was necessary for the Accomplishment of a divine Prophecy. (g) Had *Rebekah* indeed put her Husband in Remembrance of this Prophecy, and shewn how *Esau* had forfeited the Blessing by selling his Birth-right, and by marrying strange Wives, this had been a much more honourable Proceeding ; but therefore she was left to pursue her own indiscreet Method, that God might have the Honour of serving his own Purposes by the Follies of Men.

Wherein  
blameable.

BUT how culpable soever *Rebekah* may be thought in this Instance, yet there is not the like Imputation upon her in hiding from

Wherein Re-  
bekah may be  
justified.

the Jesuitical Doctrine of *Equivocation*, and *mental Reservation*, has, in a great Measure, proceeded. " Quid vero faciemus hujus commatis hominibus, says our Author, qui hac ratione mendacis, & perjuriis decumanam aperire portam non verentur ? Conclamatum erit de paſtorum omnium & contractuum fide, adeoque universæ societatis humanæ vinculo, si perversa ea sententia reciperetur. Quod si sanctus Patriarcha resurgeret, haud dubie illam audacissimorum hominum impietatem valide retunderet, & damnet ipse : Tantum abest, ut ejusdem vecordiae se reum fecerit : Qui, si humanâ infirmitate lapsus est, ut certe artificiosum illud & affectatum mentiendi genus minimè seclatius est." *Heidegger's Hist. Patriar. Vol. II. Exercit. 14.*

(c) *Heidegger*, *ibid.*  
Dissertation xxv.

(d) *Shuckford's Connection*, Vol. II. l. 7.

(e) Gen. xxvii. 33.

(f) *Saurin's*

(g) *Millar's History of the Church*, c. 1. Period 2.



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From Gen.  
xxv. 20. to  
Ch xxviii. 8.

from her Husband the true Reason of her sending away *Jacob*. (b) It is certainly a Point of great Prudence to conceal the Truth, when the Discovery of it will occasion more Harm than Good; and therefore, that she might not afflict her Husband's old Age with the unwelcome News of his Son *Esau*'s wicked Intent against his Brother, and thereby provoke his Indignation against him; she cover'd the Dismission of *Jacob* with a Reason, that was true indeed, but not that chief and latent one, which gave her the most Uneasiness, and which, if communicated to her Husband, might have been a Means of bringing his grey Hairs with Sorrow to the Grave. So that, in the whole, and according to the Proverbs of the Wise Man, she acted the Part both of a careful Wife, and a prudent Woman, for (i) *the Tongue of the Wise useth Knowledge aright*, and she, (k) *that is of a faithful Spirit, concealeth the Matter*.

*Jacob's being sent away in a poor Condition.*

WHEN *Abraham* sent his Servant into *Mesopotamia* to negotiate a Marriage for his Son *Isaac*, he had an Equipage appointed him, suitable to the Dignity of his Master, that God might be more honour'd by so fine an Appearance, and his Veracity publickly justified, in the Advancement of that *Abraham*, who had quitted all to follow him; but we shall soon perceive, that there was not the like Reason for *Isaac*'s sending away his Son *Jacob* with such an honourable Retinue, if we do but consider, (l) that the Family of *Nabor* was already sufficiently apprised of the divine Blessing, which had attended *Abraham* and his Family; that, as *Rebekah* was Sister to *Laban*, the Head of the Family, there was no need of any farther Recommendation, than that of a Letter to her Brother; that, in this Affair, it was Prudence to make *Jacob* appear as little, as might be, in order to give the less Umbrage to his Brother, and, if possible, to appease his Resentment; that it was highly expedient for *Jacob*, to tread

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in the Steps of his Grandfather *Abraham*, whose Heir he was now become, and should therefore depart from his Father's House, and cast himself entirely upon the Providence of God for his Subsistence, even as he had done; and that it was necessary for him to give a Demonstration, that it was not merely (as some suppose) an *earthly Inheritance*, which he had purchased, or a *secular Blessing*, which he had acquired, but that there was something far greater (tho' not discernable by every common Eye) which he had in View in this Acquisition: For (m) his confessing, in this Manner, *that he was but a Stranger and Pilgrim on Earth*, (notwithstanding the Right of Primogeniture in him) *declared plainly*, that, as Heir of the Promise with *Abraham* and *Isaac*, he was seeking a better Country, than either that, from whence he departed, or that, whereunto he was sent, *i. e. an heavenly*.

FROM these, and such like Considerations, and not from any Family Poverty, it was, that *Jacob* was sent into *Mesopotamia*, all alone, and without any Attendance: And, in like Manner, when *Esau*, upon his Return from Hunting, complains of his extreme Hunger, we can scarce suppose, that he found nothing at home to eat, except the Pottage, which his Brother had made. Frugality indeed was a Virtue of much more Esteem among the *Antients*, than it is among us; but it is hard to imagine, how *Isaac*, who was a Man confessedly of a plentiful Estate, and had doubtless a large Family to maintain, should keep a House utterly destitute of all Manner of Eatables. Provision there was no doubt enough; but *Esau*'s Fancy ran upon something else. He longed, greedily longed for the Soup, and the Soup he would have, whatever it cost. Its Flavour and Colour had enticed him, and every Thing he resolved to part with, rather than not gratify the present Cravings of an intemperate Appetite. And, accordingly,

*Esau's Hunger upon his Return from Hunting.*

U u u u

ingly,

(b) *Heidegger's Hist. Patriarch. Vol. II. Exercit. 14. Isthaca Bib. in Gen. xxviii. 5.*

(m) *Heb. xi. 9, 10.*

(i) *Prov. xv. 2.*

(k) *Chap. xi. 13.*

(l) *Bib.*



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ingly, we may observe, (n) that his reasoning upon this Occasion was not, that he was ready to die for Famine, and therefore would part with his Birthright; but that, according to his Course of Life, and the Perils, which he, every Day, ran in Hunting, in all Probability he would not survive his Father, and his *Birth-right*, of consequence, would avail him nothing; and therefore, having but a slender Opinion of what was to come hereafter, he made his Conclusion, much in the same Form, with the *Epicurean* in the Prophet, (o) *Let us eat and drink, for To-morrow we die.*

Isaac's loving  
Esau for his  
Venison.

Whoever considers the Chronology of that Transaction, will find that (p) *Isaac* lived about forty Years after his parting with his *prophetical* Blessing; and consequently, (q) that it was not old Age, but some Sickness and Indisposition of Body, that, at this Time, had seized him, and made him apprehensive of his approaching Death. In this Condition, it is no uncommon Thing, we know, for Mens Thoughts to run upon one Kind of Meat rather than another, and when the Stomach is deprav'd, or any ways out of order, generally to long for such Things, as are of a savoury Taste: And, if Venison, in those Countries, was more particularly adapted to that Purpose, wherein, I pray, is *Isaac* to be blam'd, for loving a Son, who took such Pains, and expos'd himself to such Dangers, that he might shew his Respect to his aged Father, and procure him now and then *some little Thing*, to please his Palate, and humour his sickly Appetite? Those, who think proper to blame the Patriarch's kind Resentment of such Affiduity, seem to have forgot the Workings of humane Nature, and how apt the very wisest of Parents are to have their Affections won, every Day more and more, by the Sedulity and Officiousness of their Children.

The dressing this Venison is represented indeed as a Province, which *Esau*

himself took upon him; and to have the eldest Son and Heir of a Family *stand Cook* (as we call it) seems to portend no great Wealth or Magnificence in it; but when we urge this, we forget the *Simplicity* of the Times, wherein *Moses* wrote, and wherein it was customary for Men of the first Rank to submit to Offices, much meaner than this. Herein then do the Truth and Authority of the *sacred History* most eminently appear, that all its Accounts and Descriptions of Things do agree with the *Sense* of the most antient Writers, and are found conformable to the *Manners* and *Customs*, that then prevailed.

And, in like manner, we may say, that (r) it is our Ignorance of the *patriarchal* Manner of living, which makes us think it unaccountable to hear, in those early Days, of so many Contests about Wells. For, were we to take a nearer Inspection into the Thing, we should soon find, that in those hot Countries, where Water was so very scarce, a *Well*, or Fountain of living Water, was a Possession of inestimable Value; and for this Reason we find *Moses*, in magnifying the divine Bounty to the Children of *Israel*, among other Parts of the *Inventory*, reckoning up, not only (s) *great and goodly Cities, which they built not*, but *Wells likewise digged, which they digged not.*

(t) Nor was it only for the Benefit of the Water, that these Wells were held in so high Esteem, but for the Memory of the *Events* and *Transactions* likewise, which were known to have happened near them. For at these Wells Angels had appeared, Miracles had been wrought, religious Assemblies held, Treaties transacted, Marriages celebrated, and Towns and Cities built; and therefore no Wonder, that the *Antients*, looking upon them as *sacred*, as well as profitable Places, shou'd be so ready to contest their Right to them, or that frequent

From Gen.  
xxv. 20. to  
Ch. xxviii. 8.

And his contesting his Right to several Wells, are all no Reflection upon the Patriarch.

Notice

(n) *Heidegger's Hist. Patriar.* Vol. II. Exercit. 12.  
(q) *Le Clerc's Annotations.*  
*Jord's Connexion*, Vol. II. 1. 7.

(r) *Bibliotheca Bib. Occas.* Annot. 29.

(s) *Isa.* xxii. 13.

(p) *Gen.* xxxv. 28, 29.

(t) *Deut.* vi. 11.

(r) *Shuck-*



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Notice should be taken of them in so compendious an History, as that of the Patriarchs.

THE Truth is, these, and perhaps some other Occurrences in the Life of this Patriarch (tho' to us they may seem strange and incongruous) do not argue any Want or Poverty, but are exactly agreeable to that Temperance, and Simplicity of Living, which, in his Days, were in Vogue. He, who was, in a Manner, sole Heir of his Father *Abraham*, (who was \* a King in the Opinion of some, but, in all Accounts, a Person of great Affluence of Fortune) and who himself had made Additions to it, enough to be envied even by neighbouring Princes, could not possibly want any necessary Accommodation of Life, nor wou'd he concern himself with Things of a trifling Consideration: But what we call Trifles, might, in those Times, be Matters of the last Importance; and, what we account Indications of Poverty, might proceed from no other Cause, but that Frugality and Parsimony, \* which, in the primitive Ages, were in

high Repute, before they came to be discountenanc'd by the present Schemes of Expence, and studied Luxury. And therefore, when we find, (u) in antient History, the *Arcadians*, feeding upon Acorns; the *Argives*, upon Apples; the *Athenians*, upon Figs; &c. when we find \* a Set of the most renown'd Heroes in the *Grecian* Army, even in the great *Achilles's* Tent, dining upon a Loin of Mutton, and an Hock of Bacon; and the *Godlike* Man *Patroclus* lighting the Fire, while the Master of the Feast was spitting the Meat; our Wonder may cease, if, in Ages before this, we meet with such an homely Dish, as *Lentil-Pottage* in a Patriarch's House, and the two Sons of the Family condescending to cook their own Victuals. This we must own is not the Practice among us; but it is a much more consistent and credible Account of Things, than if *Moses* had represented *Isaac's* Tent like a royal Palace, and every Thing serv'd up there in the same splendid Manner, as when the King and his Family dine in publick.

From Gen. xxv. 20. to Ch. xxviii. 8.

D I S S E R T

\* The Words of *Nicholaus Damascenus* (as they are quoted by *Josephus*) are these. — “ *Abraham* reign'd in *Damascus*, being a Stranger, who came out of the Land of *Chaldea*, beyond *Babylon*. His Name is, at this Day, famous about the Country of *Damascus*, and they shew us the Town, which, from him is call'd *Abraham's* Dwelling”. *Grotius* de Verit. l. i. §. 16.

\* The Manner of living, in the early Ages of the World, seems to be very well expressed by the *Roman* Satyrist.

Credo pudicitiam, Saturno Rege, moratam  
In terris, visamque diu; cum frigida parvas  
Præberet spelunca domus, ignemque, laremque,  
Et pecus, & Dominos, communi clauderit umbrâ,  
Sylvestrem montana torum cum sterneret uxor  
Frondebis, & culmo, vicinarumque ferarum  
Pellibus.  
Et sæpe horridior glandem ructante marito.

Juven. Sat. 6.

(u) *Ælian* de Variâ Historiâ. l. 3.

\* When the *Grecians* sent an Embassy to *Achilles*, desiring him to be reconcil'd to *Agamemnon*, and to return to the Camp; the Deputies, appointed for this Purpose, were *Phœnix*, *Ajax*, and *Ulysses*, and the Entertainment, which *Achilles*, upon this Occasion, gave them, is thus describ'd, and in this Manner said to have been dress'd, by the Poet.

Πάτροκλος δὲ φίλῳ ἐπετείθεθ' ἐταίρῳ  
Λύτῳ ὄνυχ' ἡρεῖτον μέγα καὶ ἄλκιον ἐν πυρὶ αὐγῇ,  
Ἐν δ' ἄρα νῶτον ἔθηκεν ὄϊον, ὃ τίον αἰγός.  
Ἐν δὲ σὺνδ' σιδήρῳ ῥάχιν τε θαλίαν ἀλοιφῇ.  
Τῷ δ' ἔχεν Ἀντομέδων τῶν δ' ἄρα δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς.  
Καὶ τὰ μὲν εὖ μίσυλλε, καὶ ἄμφ' ὀρελοῖσιν ἔθηκε  
Πῦρ ὃ Μανολιάδης δῖον μέγα ἰσθῆδος φῶς.  
Λύτῳ ἔπειθ' ὃ ἔπλεσε, καὶ εἰν' ἐλεδοῖσιν ἔχουσιν,  
Πάτροκλος μὲν σῖτον ἐλὼν ἐπένεμε τραπέζῃ,  
Καλοῖς ἐν καρέοισιν ἀτὰρ κρέα νεμεν Ἀχιλλεύς.

Hom. Iliad. ix.



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From Gen.  
xxv. 20. to  
Ch. xxviii. 8.

## DISSERTATION II.

Of Isaac's Blessing to Jacob.

### The HISTORY.

The first Insti-  
tution of these  
Kind of Bless-  
ings.

FROM the Time, that God made the Covenant with *Abraham*, and promis'd Blessings extraordinary to his Seed, it was customary for the Father of each Family, some Time before he died, to call together his Children, and to inform them, according to the Knowledge, which it pleas'd God then to give him, how, and in what Manner, the *Blessing of Abraham* was to descend among them. Whence this Custom had its Original, whether from the immediate Appointment of God, or from some secret Impulse, wherewith the Patriarchs, upon the Approach of their Departure, found themselves affected, the Silence of Scripture will not suffer us to determine; but this we may safely infer, (x) that this *Benediction* was different from those *private* Blessings, which the Patriarchs gave their Children upon sundry Occasions, and different likewise from those *publick* Blessings, which the Priests, and others in Authority, were wont to distribute among the People. It proceeded from an extraordinary *Illumination*, and had the Prospect of Futurity (so far as was necessary for its Purpose) submitted to its Inspection. The Persons, upon whom it came, had, for that Time, the Spirit of *Divination*, and what they utter'd, under its Influence, was deem'd a *prophetick Oracle*, denoting infallible Events, and extending to the utmost Period of Time.

Why Isaac de-  
sired to eat,  
before he pro-  
nounc'd his  
Blessing.

THE *Jews* indeed have a *proverbial* Saying, that the Spirit of Prophecy does not fall upon the *Melancholick*; and thence

they suppose, that, as good Eating and Drinking are known to exhilarate the Spirits, the Patriarch, by sending his Son to take Venison, was minded to make use of that Expedient, that he might be the better dispos'd to receive the divine Inspiration, and to pronounce the prophetical Benediction with Chearfulness, and with a Warmth and Emotion, sufficient to excite that Attention, which the *Prophecy*, he was about to deliver, did require.

(y) BUT as no one in his Senses can imagine, that a Person, when perfectly sober, is not as capable of the Spirit of Prophecy, as he that has plentifully din'd; others, from the Phrase, *that I may bless thee BEFORE THE LORD*, suppose (z) that *Isaac's* eating, in order to receive the Spirit of Benediction, was by him design'd to be *sacramental*, and accompany'd with some religious Rites, and solemn Invocations, tho' they happen not to be here mention'd. But this Supposition being as precarious, as the other, the safest Way is to resolve the whole Matter into the *Providence* of God, (a) who put *Isaac* into the Head of sending out *Esau* for Venison, neither to refresh his Spirits by eating, nor to perform any religious Act, but merely by his Absence, to give *Jacob* an advantageous Opportunity of appropriating the Blessing to himself.

*ISAAC* indeed meant not this, neither was it in his Heart to bless *Jacob*; and therefore, If we suppose that *Rebekah* had acquainted him with the Prophecy, which

Why he intend-  
ed it for *Esau*.

(x) Heidegger's Hist. Patriar. Vol. II. Exercit. 7.  
(a) Peal's Annotations.

(y) Le Clerc's Commentary.

(z) Bibliotheca Bib.



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which directed him to transfer the Blessing upon *Jacob*, we must suppose withal, (b) that he had now forgot it, or never rightly understood it, or apprehended, that it was to be accomplish'd, not in the Persons of *Esau* and *Jacob*, but in their Posterity (c); for it is much better to charge the *Patriarch* with want of Attention or Understanding, than with Disobedience and Prevarication.

The Benediction  
itself explain-  
ed.

HOWEVER this be, the Blessing, which he pronounces over *Jacob* by Mistake, is conceived in these Words: *God give thee of the Dew of Heaven*, (because, in hot Countries, where Showers were less frequent, the Morning and Evening Dews were a great Refreshment to the Earth, and productive of much Plenty :) *And the Fatness of the Earth*, (because *Canaan*, the Lot of his Inheritance, was a fruitful, and therefore (d) by the Prophet call'd, *a fat Land*;) *and Plenty of Corn and Wine*, (Abundance of every Product of the Earth.) *Let People serve thee*, (i. e. the *Idumæans*, who shall descend from thy Brother *Esau*, as they did in the Days of *David* :) *And Nations bow down unto thee*, (the Kingdoms of *Arabia* and *Syria*, who are sprung from *Hagar* and *Keturah* :) *Be Lord over thy Brethren*, and let thy Mother's Son bow down unto thee, (have thou the Dominion and Prerogative in thine own Family) *Cursed be every one that curseth thee*, and *blessed be every one that bleisseth thee*; for God shall so far interest himself in thy Cause, as to esteem those his Friends or Foes, who shall behave themselves, as such, to thee. So that the Blessing consists properly of three Branches: In the 1st is contain'd worldly Plenty and Prosperity: In the 2d, Dominion and Empire: And in the 3d, Family Pre-eminence, as well as the divine Protection: But then the Question is, in what Sense all this is to be understood, and to what Branch, the peculiar *Blessing of Abraham*, (which is doubtless compris'd herein) may be suppos'd to belong?

IF we look back (e) to the call of *Abraham*, and the Promises which attended it, there we shall find, (f) that, after enumerating the temporal Blessings, which were to descend from *Abraham* to his Posterity, one Blessing is added, in which all the World has an Interest, and which was convey'd to them thro' *Abraham* and his Seed; *In thee*, says God, *shall all the Families of the Earth be blessed*.

From Gen.  
xxv. 20. to  
Ch. xxviii. 8.

IF we proceed to the Blessing, which he was pleased to give to his Son *Isaac*, we shall find a Recital of the same Kinds of temporal Prosperity; a numerous Progeny promis'd, the Grant of the Land of *Canaan* renew'd, the Oath, given unto *Abraham*, confirm'd, and then follows the great and distinguishing Promise (g), *in thy Seed shall all the Nations of the Earth be blessed*. And, in like Manner, we cannot but imagine, that, in this great and solemn Blessing, which *Isaac* is giving his Son *Jacob*, there must be something of a spiritual Nature comprised, tho' couch'd under Terms, which seem to denote worldly Felicity only.

THE Author to the *Hebrews* tell us, that (h) by Faith *Isaac* blessed *Jacob* and *Esau* concerning Things to come; and what we are to understand by Faith he instructs us in the Conclusion of his Discourse; and these all (meaning the Patriarchs, he had mentioned before) having obtained a good Report through Faith, received not the Promise, God having provided some better Thing for us, that they, without us, should not be made perfect. So that this Faith did chiefly relate to the blessed Seed, which was promised in the Beginning, and from continued Tradition, and divine Revelation, in every succeeding Age, embraced by the Faithful; and therefore we can hardly suppose, but that, in this great prophetic Benediction, there must be something concerning this Seed, implied, at least, if not, expressed.

That there is  
a spiritual  
Sense and  
Meaning in it.

WHOEVER takes but a cursory View of some of the chief Passages of *Jacob's* Life,

X x x x

(b) *Pool's* Annotations.  
*Shop Sherlock's* Use and Intent of Prophecy.

(c) *Saurin's* Dissertations.

(d) *Nehem.* ix. 25.

(e) *Gen.* xii.

(f) *Bi-*

(g) *Gen.* xxvi. 4.

(h) *Ileb.* xi. 20.



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Life, will soon perceive, that, had his Father's Blessing consisted of worldly Advantages only, it was, in a Manner, quite lost upon him, since few Men enjoyed a less Share of that, than he, who was forc'd from his Home, into a far Country, for fear of his Brother; deceiv'd and oppress'd by his Uncle; and, (i) after a Servitude, of above twenty Years, compelled to flee from him; while, at the same Time, he was in imminent Danger, either of being pursu'd and brought back by *Laban*, or fallen upon, and murther'd by *Esau*. These Fears were no sooner over, but the Baseness of his eldest Son, in *defiling his Couch*; the Treachery and Cruelty of the two next, in Relation to the *Sechemites*; the Loss of his beloved Wife, and the supposed untimely Death of his Son *Joseph*; to say nothing of his being compelled by Famine to go down into *Egypt*, and there die: These, and many more Instances, are Proofs sufficient, that his Father's Blessing was of a different Nature. For, supposing it to relate to temporal Prosperity and Dominion only, wherein can we say that *Jacob* had the Pre-eminence above his Brother? (k) If *Jacob* was *blessed with the Dew of Heaven, and the Fatness of the Earth*; *Esau's* Blessing (at least according to our Translation) in this Respect is not inferior; *Thy Dwelling, says his Father, shall be the Fatness of the Earth, and of the Dew of Heaven from above. If Nations were to bow down to Jacob; Esau likewise was to live and prevail with his Sword. If Jacob's Brethren were to bow down to him; yet, the Time would come, when Esau should have Dominion, and break even this Yoke from off his Neck.* Thus, if we interpret the whole Blessing of temporal Prosperity only, the two Brothers seem to stand upon an Equality; and yet it is evident, from the whole Story, that the chief Blessing, which their Father had to bestow, was fallen upon *Jacob*, and therefore he tells *Esau*, when he pres-

fed him for a Blessing upon himself likewise; *Behold I have made him thy Lord, and all his Brethren have I given unto him for Servants, and with Corn and Wine have I sustained him, and what shall I do now unto thee, my Son?* And when *Esau* still urges his Father, and his Father thereupon blesses him, we may observe, that, of Corn, and Wine, and temporal Power, he gives him a full, and an equal Share; but then there is this Limitation in the Blessing, *Thou shalt serve thy Brother*: So that, whatever was peculiarly given to *Jacob*, was contain'd in the Grant of being Lord over his Brethren; and yet the History of the two Brothers will not allow us to expound it of any temporal Dominion; for if we should, see how the Case will stand. (l) *Jacob* is to rule over *Esau*; and yet no sooner is the Blessing given, but he flies his Country for fear of *Esau*; he lives abroad for many Years; and, when he returns, the Fear and Dread of his Brother returns with him; so that his only Refuge, in this his Distress, was to God; (m) *Deliver me, I pray thee, from the Hand of my Brother, from the Hand of Esau.* When he sends a Message to him, he styles himself, (n) *Thy Servant Jacob*: When he meets him, (o) *he bows himself to the Ground seven Times, until he comes near to Esau*: When he speaks to him, he calls him *Lord*; and when he is kindly received by him, he says, (p) *I have seen thy Face, as though I had seen the Face of God, and thou wert pleased with me.* What is there in all this, that shews any Rule and Dominion given to *Jacob* over his Brother *Esau*?

AND, in like Manner, if we imagine the Prophecy relates to temporal Dominion only, and yet was fulfilled in the Posterity of these two Brothers, the Question will be, how the Case, upon this Supposition, stands. (q) The Family of *Esau* was settled in Power and Dominion many Years, before *Jacob's* Family had any cer-

From Gen.  
xxv. 20. to  
Ch. xxviii. 8.

(i) Universal History, l. 1. c. 7.

(m) Gen. xxviii. 11.

Sherlock's Use and Intent of Prophecy, Disc. 5.

(n) Ver. 20.

(o) Chap. xxxiii. 3.

(p) Ver. 10.

(l) Ibid.

(q) Bishop



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tain Dwelling-Place. The *Dukes* and *Kings* of *Esau's* House are reckon'd up ; and the Historian tells us, that (r) *these are the Kings, who reigned in the Land of Edom, before there reigned any King over the Children of Israel.* When the appointed Time was come for establishing the House of *Israel*, and giving them the Land and Possessions of their Enemies, the Family of *Esau* were, by a particular Decree, exempted from the Dominion of *Israel* : For so the Lord commanded *Moses*, (s) *Ye are to pass through the Coast of your Brethren, the Children of Esau.* — Take ye good Heed unto yourselves therefore ; meddle not with them ; for I will not give you of their Land, no not so much as a Foot-breadth. In the Time of *David* indeed, (t) *they of Edom became his Servants* ; but, in the Days of *Jehoram*, they recovered again, (u) *and made a King over themselves*, and, in the Time of *Abaz*, they revenged the Affront, (x) *by smiting Judah, and leading them away Captives.* So that, this Variety of Fortune, between the Children of *Jacob* and *Esau*, could never be the Thing intended, or meant to be described, when the Promise was given to *Jacob*, that his Mother's Children should bow down unto him.

What that  
Meaning is ?

WHAT then is the hidden Purpose of the Words, and in what Sense are they to be taken ? Why, it seems pretty evident, that the Blessing, given to *Jacob*, and expressed in Words implying a Rule over his Brethren, was a Conveyance of the Birth-right to him, in the Family of *Abraham* ; that the Birth-right in *Abraham's* Family, (besides the Promise of the Land of *Canaan*) respected the special Blessing given unto *Abraham* by God ; and that this special Blessing denoted no other, than that Person, in whom all Families of the Earth were to be blessed, and that is *Christ*. For, (y) that the Regard of all Nations to the Seed, in which they were all to be blessed, should be expressed by

their bowing down to him, is no hard Figure of Speech ; and that the Superiority of *Jacob's* Family shou'd, one Day, be broken (as the Promise to *Esau* sets forth) when *Jews* and *Gentiles* shou'd equally become the People of God, and all Nations be equally blessed, is no more, than what the original Covenant contains. Upon the whole then we may observe, that this Prediction had its full Accomplishment, neither in the Person of *Jacob*, nor in his Posterity in general, but only in one, who, as to his human Nature, in the Fulness of Time, descended from him, and (z) *who, being in the Form of God* (as the Apostle acquaints us with both his Natures) *and thinking it no Robbery to be equal with God, made himself of no Reputation, and took upon him the Form of a Servant, and was made in the Likeness of Men, and being found in Fashion as a Man, humbled himself, and became obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Cross.* Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a Name, which is above every Name, that at the Name of *Jesus* every Knee should bow, of Things in Heaven, and Things in the Earth, and Things under the Earth, and that every Tongue shall confess, that *Jesus Christ is Lord, to the Glory of God the Father.*

SINCE this Part of the Blessing then, which *Isaac* bestowed upon *Jacob*, was of such high Import, as to refer ultimately to the Person of our blessed Saviour, and his Exaltation into Glory ; this may suggest a Reason to us, why, tho' it was certainly obtain'd by Guile, it was not afterwards revok'd, but ratified rather and confirm'd, even when his Father came to understand the Imposture. For if (a) *Prophecy came not, of old Time, by the Will of Man, but holy Men of God spake, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*, (b) then is *Isaac*, in this Action, to be consider'd only as the instrumental, and God as the principal Cause ; the Efficacy of the Blessing therefore must be

From Gen.  
xxv. 20. to  
Ch. xxviii. 8.

(r) Gen. xxxvi. 31.  
(s) 2 Chron. xxviii. 17.  
(t) 2 Pet. i. 21.

(u) Dent. ii. 4, 5.  
(y) Bishop Sherlock's Use and Intent of Prophecy, Disc. 5.  
(b) Heidegger's Hist. Patriar. Vol. II. Exercit. 14.

(a) 2 Kings viii. 20.  
(z) Phil. ii. 6, &c.



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be supposed to depend, not on his Will and Intention, but on God's Ordination and Appointment; and, consequently, *Isaac* could have no Right or Authority to disannul the Blessing, had he been minded so to do. (c) But it is much more likely, that the Remembrance of the Prophecy concerning the two Children, which *Rebekah* had vouchsafed her, before they were born, might, at this Time, come to strike him; and, seeing he had in his Blessing (tho' not designedly) confirmed the same, he might very well impute it to an over-ruling Providence, and so be concluded by the divine Determination; in which Sense that Passage, relating to *Esau*, in the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, is most proper to be applied: (d) *We know, how that afterward, when he would have inherited a Blessing, he was rejected: For he found no Place of Repentance, tho' he sought is carefully with Tears.* But how was *Esau* rejected from inheriting a Blessing, when we find, that, upon his Importunity with his Father, he obtained one? He obtained

a Blessing indeed, but not *that*, which, by hereditary Right, belonged to the First-born, and abounded with Blessings, both spiritual and temporal. This his Brother *Jacob* had supplanted him of; and yet he could not prevail with his Father to revoke it. He could not bring him to *change his Mind*, (as it is in the Margin) and *repent* of the Blessing, he had given to *Jacob*, (for (e) it is *Isaac's Repentance*, not *Esau's*, that is here under Consideration) although he sought it *with Tears*; and the Reason is, — because his Father knew, both by the Conduct of Providence in this whole Affair, and by a particular Inspiration at that Time, that the peculiar Blessings, promis'd to *Abraham*, and *his Seed*, did not belong to him, but, by the divine Appointment, were now consign'd to his Brother, and his Posterity; and therefore, to silence all farther Clamour, he tells him, with a more than ordinary *Emphasis*, and Inflexibility, (f) *I have blessed him, yea, and he shall be blessed.*

From Gen.  
xxv. 20. to  
Ch. xxviii. 8.

(c) *Le Clerc's Commentary.*  
(f) Gen. xxvii. 33.

(d) Heb. xii. 17.

(e) *Heidegger's Hist. Patriar. Vol. II. Exercit. 14.*





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From Gen.  
xxviii. 10. to  
Ch. xxxvii.



## CHAP. III.

*Of the Life of JACOB, from his going into Mesopotamia, to his Return.*

### The HISTORY.

Jacob's Vision.

AS soon as *Jacob* had receiv'd his Father's Charge and Blessing, he departed privately from *Beersheba*, and \* made the best of his Way to *Haran*; but after his first Day's Journey \*, happening to be benighted, he was forced to take up his Lodging in the open Air, with the spangled Sky to be his *Canopy*, and an hard Stone his *Pillow*. However, while he slept, he thought he saw a *Ladder* fix'd upon the Earth, and reaching up to Heaven, with Angels ascending and descending on it; and, from the Top of this Ladder, he heard God speaking unto him, and promising him (even as he had done his Forefathers) the Land of *Canaan* for his Inheritance; a large and numerous Posterity; the *Messias* to descend from his Family; a

safe Return to his native Country; and the divine Protection and Preservation every where to attend him.

THIS, in all Probability, was the first Vouchsafement of this Kind, which *Jacob* ever had; and his Dream had made such Impression upon him, that, as soon as he awak'd, he paid an awful Reverence to the Place, and, after a short Contemplation of what had pass'd, broke out into this Rapture of Wonder and Admiration; "How venerable is this Place, over which  
"are vertically the Palace of God, and  
"the Gate of Heaven, thro' which the  
"holy Angels are continually issuing out,  
"to execute the divine Commands!" And when he arose, he erected the Stone, whereon he slept, and (as the Custom of those

Y y y

Times

\* The *Jews* tell of several Miracles, which they suppose to have been wrought on the very Day that *Jacob* set out from *Beersheba*; but one more especially, viz. that God shortened the Hours, by causing the Sun to go down before its Time; and yet we are told, that from *Beersheba* to *Luz*, where he lodged the first Night, were about 48 English Miles, which was no inconsiderable Days Journey. If there be any Meaning therefore in this Fiction of theirs, it must consist in this, — That *Jacob* was sent away with his Father's Blessing, and, in Virtue of that, was filled with a certain divine Power, which supported, and carried him on with Pleasure, so that the Day might thence seem shorter to him; and, tho' his Father sent no Friend or Domestick along with him, yet there is no doubt to be made, but that there was a Companion and Guardian of a far nobler Order assigned him, who led him by the Hand, as it were, and kept him in all his Ways. *Bibliotheca Bibl. in Locum.*

\* The Place where *Jacob* took up his Lodging, was near *Luz*, which signifies an *Almond*, and might very likely have its Name from the many Groves of Almond-Trees, which were thereabouts; and under some of which, 'tis not unlikely that *Jacob* might take up his Lodging, because the Largeness of their Leaves, in that Country, wou'd afford no incommodious Shelter from the Weather. *Jacob*, upon the Account of the Vision, which he had in this Place, called it *Bethel*; and the *Israelites*, when they conquer'd *Canaan*, in Remembrance of the same, continu'd the Name. It lay to the West of *Hai*, about eight Miles to the North of *Jerusalem*, in the Confines of the Tribes of *Ephraim* and *Benjamin*. So that, upon the Revolt of the ten Tribes, it belonged to the Kingdom of *Israel*, and was therefore one of the Cities, where *Jeroboam* set up his golden Calves, whence the Prophet *Hosea* [Chap. iv. 15.] alluding to the Name given it by *Jacob*, calls it *Beth-aven*, instead of *Bethel*, i. e. the House of Vanity or Idols, instead of the House of God. *Patrick's Commentary*, and *Well's Geography*, of the Old Testament, Vol. I.



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Times was) † pour'd Oil upon it, and then, in pious Commemoration of the heavenly Vision, called the Place, (which before was called *Luz*) by the Name of *Bethel*, i. e. the House of God. But, before he went from thence, he made a † solemn Vow to God, "That, if he would protect and prosper him in his Journey, provide him with † common Necessaries in his Absence, and grant him an happy Return to his Father's House; to him alone would he direct his religious Worship; in that very Place where the Pillar stood, upon his Re-

turn, would he make his devout Acknowledgments, and offer unto him the † Tenth of whatever he should gain in the Land of *Mesopotamia*."

HAVING thus performed his Devotions, he ‖ proceeded in his Journey, and, after some Weeks, arrived at *Haran*. As he came near the Town, he saw some Shepherds, with their Flocks, not far from a Well, which was covered with a large Stone; and, while he was enquiring of them concerning *Laban* and his Family, he was given to understand, that they were all well, and that it would not be long before

From Gen.  
xxviii. 10. to  
Ch. xxxvii.

His Arrival  
at Haran, and  
Interview  
with Rachel.

† Hence it seems evident, that *Jacob* did not leave his Father's House, without being first provided for his Journey; for it cannot be thought, that, if he wanted other Necessaries, he would have carried Oil along with him, and that in such Plenty, as to pour it out, in such a seemingly profuse Manner, upon an inanimate Subject. *Bibliotheca Bibl.*

† Several Annotators have observ'd, that this is the first Vow, that we read of in Scripture; but this is no Reason for our supposing, that *Jacob* was the first, who worshipped in this Manner, but rather that in this he did no more, than what his Fathers, *Abraham* and *Isaac*, had done before him, and as they had instructed him, both by Example and Precept. As for *Abraham*, tho' there be no mention made expressly of a Vow, yet very certain it is, that in effect he did the same Thing. For, when the Lord is said to have made a Covenant with him, *Abraham*, on his Part, must be supposed to express his Consent and Acceptation of it; and not only so, but to vow and promise to perform the Conditions, in order to attain the Benefit of it. And, in like Manner, when *Isaac* is said to have intreated the Lord for his Wife, 'tis highly probable, that he vowed a Vow to God, that, upon his Performance of the Promise of multiplying his Seed, &c. he would, on his Part, as an Acknowledgment of it, make some or other suitable Return; for the Word, which we render *intreat*, in its Original, has a much stronger Signification, and denotes a soliciting of Favours, whether from God or Man, by Gifts, Vows, or Promises. So that we may justly conclude, that his Son did not do this of his own Head, or upon an immediate Revelation commanding him so to do, but that he was before taught, and instructed by his Father in this Solemnity, as a Part of both natural and positive Religion. *Biblioth. Biblica.*

† *Jacob's* Words, upon this Occasion, are, *If God will give me Bread to eat, and Raiment to put on*, which two Articles comprize all the Necessaries of Life, and therefore we find them, in the Writings of the Philosophers, always put together. For these are the Bounds, says *Seneca*, [Ep. 4.] which Nature has set us, that we should not hunger, nor thirst, nor be cold: For our Diet and Dress, says *Tully*, should contribute to our Health and Strength, not to Luxury or Pleasure, [de Offic. l. 1. c. 13.] We may observe however farther, that, by the Patriarch's covenanting here with God only for Food and Raiment, does appear the gross Mistake of those, who pretend that he supplanted his Brother for covetous Ends, as if his Father's Estate, and the Possession of a rich Country for himself, and his Heirs, were the Things, which he had only in View. *Le Clerc's* Commentary, and *Bibliotheca Bibl.* in Locum.

† This is the second Mention of *Tythes* or *Tenths*, and the first Dedication of them to God; and, from this Place we may fairly conclude, that *Jacob*, the Grand-Child of *Abraham*, vowing the Tenth of all (as *Abraham* had given the Tenth of the Spoil) was induced to do it by the Custom, which then prevailed among religious People. How they came to pitch upon this Portion, rather than a fifth, a sixth, or any other Quantity, is not so easy to be resolved; but they seem to speak with much Reason, who observe, that, in this Number ten, all Nations in a Manner do end their Account, and then begin again with compound Numbers, or (as others phrase it) that this is the End of less Numbers, and the Beginning of the greater, for which Reason it was looked on as the most perfect of all other, and accordingly had in great Regard: But, after all, it seems most likely, that they had some divine Precept and Direction for it. At this Time, 'tis certain, that the Order of Priesthood was not instituted; and therefore the only Purposes, to which *Jacob* could appropriate the Tythes, he gave, were, either for the Maintenance of Burnt-Sacrifices, and other pious Uses, or perhaps for the Relief of the Poor. But how, and when, he actually performed his Vow, does no where appear in Scripture, unless it was from his Return from *Padan-Aran* [Gen. xxxv. 7, 14.] when he built an Altar at *El Bethel*, and set up a Pillar in the Place, where God had talked with him, and poured a Drink-Offering, and Oil thereon. *Patrick's* Commentary.

‖ The Words in the Text are, *And came to the Land of the People in the East*, Gen. xxix. 1. which makes some imagine, that he travelled Eastward: But this is a Mistake, because *Mesopotamia*, and particularly *Haran*, lay Northward from *Bethel*. *Babylon* however lay Eastward from both Places; and therefore *Mesopotamia* being Part of the *Babylonish* Dominions, the *Babylonians* might well be called the People of the East, and *Jacob* is only said to have gone into a Country, of which they were Lords and Masters. *Bedford's* Scripture Chronology, l. 3. c. 4.



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fore his Daughter † *Rachel* would be there with her Flock. Nor had this Discourse long passed, before she came; where upon *Jacob* having very obligingly rolled away the Stone, and watered her Sheep for her, took Occasion to let her know who he was; and, as he proceeded to salute his Cousin, was, in a Manner, ready to weep for Joy; while she made what haste she cou'd home, in order to inform her Father, of what had passed. He immediately came to meet his Nephew, and receiv'd him with all the Kindness, and all the Tenderness imaginable, whilst he related to him † the Occasion of his leaving his Father's Family, and what Adventures, he had met with, in the Way.

Marries both  
her, and her  
Sister Leah.

*JACOB* had not been long in his Uncle's House, before he applied himself to Business; and having now serv'd him, for the Space of a Month, in the Capacity of a Shepherd, his Uncle, one Day, took an Occasion to discourse him, and to let him know, that he neither expected, nor thought it reasonable, to have his Labour for nothing, and therefore desir'd him to name what Wages he wou'd have. The

lovely Shepherdes had already captivated *Jacob's* Heart; and therefore he names her for the Reward † of his Seven-years Service, which her Father readily consented to, and he as readily enter'd upon; because the Love, which he had to his *Rachel*, made him account the longest Time short.

*LABAN*, we must know, had another Daughter, named *Leah*, older than *Rachel*, but not so beautiful, having some Blemish, or Soreness in her Eyes; and when the Time of *Jacob's* Servitude was expired, and he demanded his Wife, his Father-in-law seem'd to solemnize the Nuptials with great Magnificence, but, in the Evening, he put an unfair Trick upon him. For, instead of the beauteous *Rachel*, he † brought the blear-ey'd *Leah* to his Bed; which when *Jacob* perceiv'd next Morning, and thereupon made just Remonstrances, the Father had his Answer ready, and, in a magisterial Tone, told him, "That it was an unprecedented Thing in that Country (and wou'd have been deem'd an Injury to her Sister) to marry the Younger before the Elder; but,"  
" (continu'd

From Gen.  
xxviii. 10. to  
Ch. xxxvii.

† *Rachel*, in the Hebrew Tongue, signifies a Sheep: Nor need we wonder at her being called so, since it was a common Thing, among the Antients, to give Names, not only to particular Persons, but even to considerable Families [as the Words *Porcius*, *Ovilus*, *Caprilus*, *Equilus*, &c. mentioned by *Varro de Re Rusticâ*, l. 2. c. 1. sufficiently shews] from Cattle, both great and small. Much less Reason have we to wonder, that we find her keeping her Father's Sheep, since that Employment, in those early Days, was accounted very honourable, as from *Homer*, and other antient Writings, is sufficiently evident. We need not suppose however, that the whole Drudgery of the Work lay upon her; she had those under her, who took this off her Hands, and her Business was only, as the chief Shepherdes, to inspect over them. *Patrick's Commentary.*

† The Things, which *Jacob* inform'd his Uncle *Laban* of at this Time, may be supposed to be such, as related to the Occasion of his Journey; as, particularly, all that had passed between his Brother and him, as to the Right of *Primogeniture*; the Purchase which he had made of it, and what ensu'd; their two different Manners of living; the Design of his Father, with respect to them; the Management of the Mother, to procure him the Blessing; the Resentment of his Brother at this Disappointment; the prudent Dismissal of himself thereupon, both by Father and Mother; the Displeasure, they had conceived at his Brother's matching himself into strange Families; and the strict Orders, they had therefore given him, to take a Wife out of his own Kindred, and of the House of his Mother's Father, which was the Reason of his coming thither; and, lastly, the wonderful Occurrences, he had met with on his Journey, more especially, as to the whole Affair of *Bethel*, and the happy meeting of his Daughter at the Well, to his great and surprising Satisfaction. *Bibliotheca Bibl.*

† It was a Custom, which had prevailed almost in all Ages, that, in contracting Marriages, as the Wife brought a Portion to the Husband, so the Husband should be likewise obliged to give her, or her Parents, Money, or Presents, (which sometimes in Scripture are called the Dowry) in Lieu of this Portion: But *Jacob*, being destitute of Money, offers his Uncle seven Years Service, which must needs have been equivalent to a large Sum; and being so, it is more to be wondered at, that he did not send over to his Parents, for a Supply upon this Occasion, rather than bind himself a Servant for so long a Term. But, from the Custom in use among us, there is no Judgment to be made what the Custom and Practice was then. *Bibliotheca Bibl.* and *Le Clerc's Commentary.*

† The Modesty of those Times made them bring the Bride to her Husband's Bed veiled, and without Lights, which gave *Laban* an Opportunity to impose upon *Jacob*, and made it a Thing almost impossible for him to discern the Deception; until next Morning. *Howell's History*, and *Patrick's Commentary.*



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(continu'd he, in a milder Tone) if you will † fulfil the nuptial Week with your Wife, and consent to serve another seven Years for her Sister, I am content to take your Word for it, and to give *Rachel* to you, as soon as the seven Days are ended." *Jacob* could not but be troubled at such unfair Procedure, but he loved *Rachel* too well, not to obtain her at any Price; and therefore he consented to these hard Conditions, and at the Week's End, was married to *Rachel* likewise.

The Children  
he had by them.

But, tho' he preferred *Rachel* much before *Leah*, yet God put quite another Difference between them, by making the latter the Mother of four Sons, *Reuben*, *Simeon*, *Levi*, and *Judah*, before her Sister had one. This was so great a Trouble to *Rachel*, that she came one Day, in a Fit of Melancholy, and told her Husband, that unless he gave her Children also, she should certainly die with Grief. Which Speech, seeming to lay the Blame of her Sterility upon him, so provoked him, that he sharply rebuked, and told her; "That it was not in his Power to work Miracles; that God, who had shut up her Womb, was alone able to open it; but that such uneasy and discontented Behaviour was the Way to prevent, rather than obtain, such a Favour." This mortifying Answer made her bethink herself of supplying the Defect of Nature, by her Grandmother *Sarah*'s

Expedient, and therefore she desir'd her Husband to take her Handmaid *Bilhah* for a concubinary Wife, and by that Means to try to make her a Mother; which he consenting to, had by her a Son, whom *Rachel* named *Dan*, and, in a proper Space of Time, another, whom she called *Naphtali*. After which *Leah*, supposing herself to have left off Child-bearing, and willing to imitate her Sister's Policy, gave her Maid *Zilpah* to her Husband, by whom she had likewise two Sons, *Gad* and *Ashur*.

From Gen.  
xxviii. 10. to  
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ABOUT this Time it so fell out, that *Reuben*, *Jacob*'s eldest Son, going into the Fields, about the Time of Wheat-harvest, chanced to meet with some *Mandrakes*, which he gathered, and carried to his Mother, *Leah*. *Rachel* no sooner saw them, but desiring to have some of them, receiv'd from *Leah* a forbidding Answer; "That having robbed her of her Husband's Affections, she could not expect to have any Part in her Son's Present." It was † *Rachel*'s Turn that Night to have her Husband's Company; and therefore, to compromise the Matter, she tells her Sister, that in case she will oblige her with some of her Son's *Mandrakes*, she would wave her Pretensions, and consign the Right of his Bed to her. Upon *Jacob*'s coming home, *Leah* calls upon him to confirm the Bargain, which accordingly he did, and the Consequence was, that she conceived again, and had a fifth

† Some are of Opinion, that by her Week (as it is in the Text) we are to understand, a Week of Years, or seven Years, and consequently, that to fulfil her Week was as much as to say, that *Jacob* was to serve other seven Years for *Rachel*, before he was to marry her. Some old English Versions render it thus: But the Order of the Story seems to gainsay it. For, tho' *Jacob* liv'd with *Laban* twenty Years, it is plain, that, at the End of the fourteenth Year, he proposed to part, and return home, and yet we may observe, that *Rachel* (tho' she had been a good while barren) had borne *Joseph* before that Time, which could not have been, had not she been married before the End of his second seven Years Service. Since *Laban* then (as we read Gen. xxix. 22.) had invited a great deal of Company, and the Custom, in those Days, was, to devote a whole Week to the nuptial Solemnities, the plain Sense of his Words to *Jacob* (according to *Selden*'s short Comment on them, *de Jure Nat.* l. 5. c. 5.) is this, "——— Since Marriages are to be celebrated, according to Custom, by a seven Days Feast; compleat this Marriage, thou hast begun with *Leah*, and then, upon Condition of another seven Years Service, thou shalt marry *Rachel* also, and keep her Wedding-Feast seven Days." And the Reason why *Laban* was so desirous of this, was, that a Week's Cohabitation with *Leah* might be a Means, either to knit *Jacob*'s Affection to her, or, at least, to confirm the Marriage so, that it should not be in his Power to disannul it. *Le Clerc* and *Patrick*'s Commentaries, *Howell*'s History, and *Pool*'s Annotations.

† The Custom of those Countries, where Polygamy was allowed, was for the Husband to take his Wives by Turns. The Kings of *Persia* (if we believe *Herodotus*) were not exempt from that Rule; which makes it more probable, that *Rachel* sold her Turn to her Sister for that Night, than that she directed her Husband, which of the four he should lie with. Universal History, l. 1. c. 7.



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fifth Son, whom she called *Iffachar*; after him another, named *Zebulun*; and last of all, a Daughter, whose Name was *Dinab*, the Feminine of *Dan*.

*RACHEL* had hitherto no Issue of her own Body; but now it pleased God to remember her, and to bless her with a Son, whom she called *Joseph*. And, it was not long after his Birth, that his Father *Jacob*, having now served out his last seven Years, began to entertain Thoughts of returning into his own Country, and accordingly desired of his Uncle to dismiss him and his Family. But *Laban*, who had found, by Experience no small Advantage by having such a Servant, begged him to stay with him a little longer; and promised him, upon that Condition, to give him whatever Wages, he should think fit to name. Hereupon *Jacob* took an Occasion of reminding him, how much his Substance had increased, since it was put under his Care, but that it was now high Time for him to make some Provision for his own Family; and that therefore he was resolv'd to return to *Canaan*, unless he could shew him some Way of improving his Fortune in *Mesopotamia*. *Laban* could not bear the Thoughts of parting; and therefore he press'd him to stay, and offer'd him his own Terms, which at last were resolved into this Agreement, — That, in the whole Flock, both of Sheep and Goats, a Separation should be made between the speckled and the white; that the spotted Cattle should be given to *Laban's* Sons to keep, and that

*Jacob* should have the Care of the *White*; and that whatever † spotted or brown Sheep or Goats should, from that Time forward, be produced out of the white Flock (which he was to keep) should be accounted his Hire. *Laban* was very well satisfy'd with these Conditions. Accordingly, the Flocks were parted; The spotted Cattle were deliver'd to *Laban's* Sons; the Remainder, that were white, were given to *Jacob*; and, that there might be no Possibility of intermixing, they were sent three Days Journey apart.

WHETHER it was from his own Observation of the Power of Fancy, in the Time of Conception, or (what seems more likely) from some private Suggestion of the divine Wisdom, that the Project proceeded; but so it was, that, by *Jacob's* taking Twigs of green Wood, peeling off the Rinds in Slips, and so laying them in the watering Places, when the Flocks came to drink † about coupling-time, these speckled Twigs struck the Eyes of the Females, and so made them conceive and bring forth party-colour'd young ones. But it was not to all the Flock that *Jacob* did this, only to such, as were the ablest and strongest; for those, that were weak and languid, he left to their natural Course, that his Artifice might be the less suspected, when it appear'd that the Number of his Father-in-law's Cattle was not too much diminished.

HIS Father-in-law however, envying his Prosperity, repented of his Bargain, and several Times alter'd the Agreement,

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which

From Gen.  
xxviii. 10. to  
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He returns to  
Canaan.

† *Joseph* signifies *Increase*; and the Reason, why *Rachel* named him so, is said to be, because God had taken away her Reproach; for to be barren was formerly reckoned a Disgrace, for these three Reasons: 1. Because Fruitfulness proceeded from the Blessing of God, who said, *increase and multiply*; 2. Because barren People seem to be excluded from the Promises of God, made to *Abraham*, concerning the vast Multiplication of his Seed; and, 3. Because the *Messias* could not proceed from them. *Pool's Annotations*.

† The sacred Historian makes use of four different Words, to denote the Cattle, which shou'd properly belong to *Jacob*: The first is *nakod*, which we translate *speckled*; for the Word signifies little *Points*, or *Pricks*, which the *Greeks* call *στυμαλα*. The second is *talū*, which signifies such broader and larger *Spots*, as we frequently see in Cattle. The next is *akod*, which signifies spotted with *divers Colours*, or rather with *Rings*, or *Circles* about the Feet or Legs; and the last is *barud*, which signifies *whitish Spots*, like *Hail*; which seems to take in all the Kinds of Variegation. *Patrick's Commentary*.

† Several ancient Commentators are of Opinion, that *Jacob* laid these streaked Rods before the Cattle, only in Spring Time, when the Sun was ascending, and the Cattle lusty and vigorous, but let them alone, when the Cattle came to couple in *September*, or the Decline of the Year: But as there is no Certainty in this, our *Moderns* have thought it more reasonable to suppose, that he laid the Rods only before the young and lusty Sheep and Goats, but left the old and weak to take their Chance, by which Means the best Lambs and Kids came to his Share, and the worst to *Laban's*. *Universal History*, 1. 2. c. 7. and *Patrick's Commentary*.



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which God, as many Times, turned to *Jacob's* Advantage; till at length, observing in his Carriage a Coldness and Indifference, and over-hearing, at a certain Time, his Sons grudging and complaining, that he had raised himself an Estate out of their Fortunes, he began to form a Resolution of retiring into his own Country, with his Family and Effects, which God in a Vision confirm'd him in; but, before he put it in Execution, he thought it proper to advise with his two principal Wives, and to endeavour to gain their Consent. To this Purpose he sent for them into the Field, that he might have an Opportunity of discoursing the Matter with more Freedom and Privacy; and then told them, that, for some Time, he had observ'd, that their Father's Carriage had been alter'd, but for what Reason he could not devise: He appealed to them concerning his Fidelity and Diligence, and their Father's unworthy Requital of him; reminded them of God's Goodness in defeating his || Contrivances against him, and converting them to his great Advantage and Increase; acquainted them, that the same God, who had thus blessed him, had appeared to him (as he did at *Bethel*, in his Passage from *Canaan* thither) and commanded him to return to his native Country, which Command he was resolv'd to obey. They heard him with a willing Mind, declar'd their Opinion concerning their Father, in the same Manner, as he had done, and professed themselves ready to attend him,

when he pleas'd to set out. *Jacob* therefore preparing all Things for the Journey, mounting his Wives and Children upon Camels, and taking the Advantage of his Father-in-law's Absence (which gave *Rachel* an Opportunity likewise of stealing away his Gods) himself went along with the Cattle, and all the other Substance, which he had acquir'd at *Haran*: He had now pass'd † the *Euphrates*, and gain'd † the Mountains of *Gilead*, (as they were afterwards called) before *Laban* had Intelligence of his Flight, and was able to overtake him. *Laban*, no doubt, at his first setting out after *Jacob*, pursu'd him with a Mind whetted with Revenge; but God, who appeared to him that Night in a Dream, was pleas'd to avert it, by threatening him severely, if he committed any Hostility or Violence against him: So that, the next Morning, when he, and the Relations he had with him, came to speak with *Jacob*, he only expostulated with him, that he had stolen away, without giving him an Opportunity to take his Leave of his Children, and Grandchildren, or to send them home with an Equipage suitable to their Rank, or with the usual Ceremonies of Musick and Dancing. *Jacob*, on the other Hand, was not without his Complaints. The Cheat, which *Laban* had put upon him, in making him serve so long for a Woman he did not love; the changing his Salary so many Times, and his late strange Behaviour towards him and his Family; all these, and many more

From Gen.  
xxviii. 10. to  
Ch. xxxvii.

Is overtaken  
by his Father-  
in-law, and  
expostulates  
with him.

be

|| In the Complaint, which *Jacob* makes to his Wives, there is one particular Article against their Father, viz. that he *had changed his Wages ten Times*, Gen. xxxi. 7. And yet he lived in Contract with him only six Years. But to solve this Difficulty, we are to observe, that the Cattle in *Mesopotamia* bred twice every Year; and therefore supposing that, for the first Year, *Laban* stood to his Bargain, but seeing his Son-in-law thrive exceedingly, alter'd the Form of it the next, and so continued to do every half Year, till the sixth Year came about, when *Jacob* thought proper to leave him; the several Times, wherein he *changed his Wages*, will be exactly ten; though there is no Necessity for this exact Calculation, when it is so common a Figure of Speech, to put a certain for an uncertain Number. *Le Clerc's* and *Patrick's* Commentary.

† Tho' the Text does not say what River he pass'd, yet it is plain, it could be no other, than the *Euphrates*, which the Scripture sometimes call the River *Perab*, sometimes the *great River*, and sometimes emphatically the *River*; either because *that*, and the *Nile*, were the only two considerable ones, the *Israelites* knew; or because it was one of the four Rivers of *Paradise*; or, lastly, because it was the Boundary of the *Promised Land*. *Universal History* l. 1. c. 7.

† The Heap of Stones, which *Laban* and *Jacob* rais'd in Memory of their Agreement and Covenant, was called *Gilead*, i. e. an *Heap of Witnesses*; and in After Ages, gave the Name to the whole Country thereabout, which lies on the East of the Sea of *Galilee*, being Part of that Ridge of Mountains, which ran from Mount *Libanon* Southward on the East of the *Holy Land*, and included the mountainous Region, called in the *New Testament*, *Trachonitis*. *Well's* Geography, Vol. I. Ch. 13.



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he answer'd him, were but ill Requitals for his Care and Diligence, as well as the Blessings, which God had heaped upon him for his Sake. *Laban* had yet another Thing to lay to his Charge, namely, the stealing of his *Gods*: But *Jacob*, (who knew nothing of *Rachel's* Theft) desir'd him to make the most diligent Search for them throughout his Family; assuring him withal, that the Person, on whom they were found, should immediately be put to Death. Hereupon *Laban* went, and searched every Place; but, as he enter'd into *Rachel's* Tent, (who had hid them under the Camel's Furniture, and set herself down upon them) she kept her sitting, and alledged in Excuse, That the Condition, she was in, allow'd her Sex to be excus'd from the usual Ceremonies. *Laban* not suspecting the Fallacy, which his Daughter had put upon him, in Point of Modesty, desisted from any farther Search; and so went and acquainted his Son-in-law with his bad Success; whereupon *Jacob*, appealing to his very Friends, sharply upbraided him with his unjust Suspicion; and then, recounting the long Servitude he had held him in, and the many Hardships he had made him undergo both Day and Night, together with the cruel and unequal Terms he had all along put upon him, he concluded with these Words, *Except the God*

of my Father had been with me, surely thou hadst sent me away empty.

From Gen.  
xxviii. 10. to  
Ch. xxxvii.

THIS Charge of *Jacob's* was so just; that *Laban* could make no Defence for himself; and therefore he thought it best to let fall the Debate, and to enter upon a more agreeable Subject, which was to make an Alliance between them, and to erect a † Monument, as a standing Witness of it to all future Ages. At the same Time they took mutual Oaths; that neither of them should, at any Time, invade the other; and *Jacob* in particular, that he would use his Wives and Children with all becoming Tenderness and Affection.

WHEN this Ceremony was over, and a Sacrifice, in Confirmation of it, offer'd; *Jacob* feasted the whole Company for the rest of the Day; and, in the Morning, *Laban*, having embraced, and blessed the whole Family, return'd home to *Padan-Aram*.

*JACOB* had no sooner parted with his Father-in-law, but the Remembrance of his Brother's antient Grudge against him began to give him fresh Uneasiness; but the Vision of a great † Number of Angels, (sent from Heaven to protect him) which he had in his Way to *Canaan* (at a Place, which he therefore call'd † *Mahanaim*, i. e. two Camps, viz. one of Angels,

† This Monument *Jacob* seems to have erected after the same Manner, as he did that at *Bethel*. It must not be supposed to have been a Heap of loose Stones; for then it could not have continued long in the same Position, nor given a Name to the Country around it. It was doubtless a regular and permanent Building; but then, what the Form and Figure of it was, it is not so easy to determine. Had it been only for a Memorial to Posterity, and not for some present Transaction also, the Figure either of a Column, or a Pyramid, would have been very proper: But we find, that the present Use of it was, to eat and sacrifice upon, and therefore we may imagine, that it was made in the Figure of a Table, and have some Authority to think of a round Table, because the Name, which *Jacob* calls it by, is taken from a Verb, which signifies *to turn round*, as the Word *Gilal* is properly the Circumference of a Circle. *Bibliotheca Bibl.*

† Interpreters are generally of Opinion, that these were two Hosts, or Armies of Angels, whereof one was that of the guardian Angel of *Mesopotamia*, who, with his Company, conducted *Jacob* safely to the Confines of *Canaan*, where the guardian Angel of *Canaan*, with his Company, received him into their Care; and this is infer'd from the Necessity of such Protection, by *Jacob's* being exposed to the Treachery of *Laban*, and the Cruelty of *Esau*, which made Providence more particularly careful of him, to whom the Promises were made. But it is sufficient to the Purpose of giving the Patriarch Comfort and Encouragement under his uneasy Apprehensions, that, besides his own Family (which was pitched here in Order, like a Camp) a certain Number of Angels were represented to him, as drawn up like another Army, ready and prepared for his Defence. *Patrick's* and *Le Clerc's* Commentaries.

† This Place was situated between Mount *Gilead*, and the River *Jabbok*, not far from the Banks of the latter, and very near the Confines of *Gad*, and half Tribe of *Manasseh*, which was on the East of *Jordan*. It became in Time a City of great Strength, and for this Reason, was made Choice of by *Abner* for the Seat-Royal of *Ishbosheth*, the Son of *Saul*, when he made War against *David*, and for a retiring Place by *David* himself, during the Rebellion of his Son *Absalom*. *Wells's Geography of the Old Testament*, Vol. I. c. 13.



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Angels, and the other of his own Retinue) did dissipate his Anxiety for a while. As he approach'd to his Brother's Country however, his Fears and Uneasiness return'd upon him: And therefore he thought it adviseable, before he advanc'd any farther, to send him a *submissive* Message, in order to discover, at least, how he stood affected to him. *Esau*, when *Jacob* was gone to *Haran*, understanding how strictly his Father had charged his Brother not to marry a *Canaanitish* Woman, began to be dissatisfied with his own Marriages; and therefore went to *Ismael*, and, having married one of his Daughters, settled in Mount † *Seir*, in the Land of *Edom*. Hither it was that *Jacob* sent some of his † chief Servants, with Instructions to acquaint his Brother, that, after a Stay of twenty Years in *Mesopotamia*, and the Acquisition of all Manner of Wealth there, he was now upon his Return to his native Country; but that he could not pass over *Jordan*, without notifying his Arrival to him, and imploring his Favour and Friendship.

THE Messengers went, and soon return'd again, but with this melancholy News, that his Brother was coming to meet him, at the Head of four hundred Men; which made him conclude, that this must be with

an hostile Intent, and in order to destroy both him, and all that belong'd to him. In this Situation what could he do? To fight, he was not able, and to fly, his Retinue was too cumbersome. At length he came to this Resolution, to divide his Company into two Bands, that, if *Esau* should fall upon one, he might have a Possibility of escaping with the other: And, having done this, he address'd himself to God in a very humble and submissive Prayer; acknowledging "his great Mercies to him, and his own "Unworthiness of them; imploring his "future Protection against his Brother's "Sword; and that he wou'd be so gracious, as to fulfil all his former Promises "to him."

*JACOB* had acquainted his Brother, how God had enriched him: That therefore his first Message might not look like an empty Piece of Formality, he order'd a Present of the choice of his Flocks and Herds to be sent before, in several Drove, and charged the Drivers, that, whenever they met his Brother, they should tell him, that they were Presents sent by *Jacob* to his Lord *Esau*, in hopes of obtaining his Favour and Good-will; and, after this, he sent his Wives, and Children, and all his Substance, over the Brook † *Jabbok*, early next Morning, before it was Day, whilst himself,

From Gen.  
xxviii. 10. to  
Ch. xxxvii.

† The Mountains of *Seir* lay on the East and South of the Dead-Sea, and the Country extended itself from thence to the Arabian Gulf. 'Tis certain from Gen. xxxvi. 21, 22. that, in Abraham's Days, the *Horites*, who were the Descendants of *Seir*, had the Possession of this Region; and therefore we may suppose, that, after the Departure of *Jacob*, *Esau*, who (according to the Prediction concerning him) was to live by his Sword, expell'd the old Inhabitants, and made himself Prince thereof, before his Brother returned from *Mesopotamia*. From Gen. xxxii. 13. xxxiii. 4. xxxvi. 8, 9. and Deut. ii. 12. we may learn, that *Esau* made War with these People with great Success, tho' we have of it no Particulars in the Writings of *Moses*. *Calmet's Dictionary*, under the Word *Seir*.

† Several Commentators have taken Notice of *Jacob's* great Wisdom and Prudence, in the Order and Disposition of this his Embassy to his Brother. He sent his Servants, and not his Sons, tho' that would have been doing him a great deal more Honour; but then it would have been running too great a Risque. In the Present, which he sent, he put a Space between Drove and Drove, that the more Time was taken up in their passing by *Esau*, his Passion might still grow cooler and cooler; that the Present itself might make so much the greater Appearance; and that, if the Drove, which went first, were not well accepted by him, those, who came later, might be at Distance enough, to hasten back to their Master, and give him Intelligence of what he was to expect. In the Form of Address, he ordered them all to make use of the same Words, 1st, That the Repetition of them might strike the deeper, and make the stronger Impression upon *Esau*; 2dly, That they might not spoil the Compliment, or not speak so properly, if left to their own Expression; and, 3dly, That *Esau* might know, by the very Turn and Elegancy of them, that the Words of the Message came from *Jacob*. *Musculus*, *Ainsworth*, *Patrick*, &c. The Appellation, he given his Brother of being his Lord, and himself his Servant, we shall take notice of hereafter.

† This is a small River, which is by all agreed to flow from the adjacent Mountains of *Gilead*; but some make it to run into the Sea of *Galilee*, others into the River *Jordan*, below, or South of that Sea. *Well's Geography of the Old Testament*, Vol. 1. c. 13.



A. M.  
2149, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1855, &c.  
Wrestles with  
an Angel.

himself, all alone; † tarried behind for some Time. And here it was, that an Angel, in the Shape of a Man, appear'd to him, and began to wrestle with him. The Contest was certainly unequal; but so it was, that the Angel did not overcome him; but, to shew how easily he might have done it, at one Touch he put his Thigh out of Joint. He then told him the *symbolical* Intent of his *wrestling* with him; and, after he had blessed him, gave him ‡ the additional Name of *Israel*, which signifies, a *Man, that has prevailed with God*: And this occasioned *Jacob* to call the Place, where this Transaction happen'd, *Peniel*, or the *Face of God*, because he concluded that it was God, or some of his Angels, who had had this Conflict with him.

As soon as the Angel was gone, *Jacob*, tho' lame, made what haste he cou'd to join his Company; and it was not long, before he saw his Brother afar off, coming towards him with a large Retinue, which made him betray some fresh Tokens of Distrust: And therefore, to prepare for the worst, he divided his Family into three Companies, and placed them at equal Distances; the two *Maids*, and their Sons, went first; *Leah* and her Children next; and *Rachel* and *Joseph*, (who was then about six Years old) as farthest from Danger, were the last; whilst himself marched in the Front of all, and, as he approach'd his Brother, bowed himself to the Ground *seven Times*.

And is kindly  
receiv'd by his  
Brother Esau.

W H A T E V E R Apprehensions *Jacob*  
N U M B. XXIV.

might conceive of *Esau's* Resentments, he had the Happiness to meet him in a much better Temper, than he expected. At first Sight, he ran to meet him; he embraced him with the greatest Tenderness; he wept over him with Tears of Joy; and, seeing his Wives and Children prostrate themselves before him one after another, and in the same Order, wherein *Jacob* had disposed them, he returned their Civilities with the same Tenderness, that he had his Brother's. The Presents indeed, which *Jacob* had sent him, he kindly acknowledg'd, but desir'd to be excus'd from accepting of them, because they were *superfluous* to him, who had enough of every Thing; but *Jacob* pressed him so earnestly, that at length he prevailed: And therefore, to make him a Recompence, *Esau* invited him to *Seir*, and proffer'd his Service to accompany, and conduct him thither. *Jacob* however had no Design to accept of the Invitation, and yet was afraid directly to refuse it. And therefore he represented the Tenderness of his Children and Flocks, and that they cou'd not travel with Expedition. He begged that they might not confine him to their slow Movements, but that he wou'd return home his own Pace; and promis'd withal, that they wou'd follow as fast as they cou'd conveniently. *Esau* then offer'd to leave him a sufficient Number of his Men, that might guard and conduct them into his Territories; but this Compliment likewise *Jacob*, in an handsome Manner, evaded, and so they † parted;

From Gen  
xxviii. 10. to  
Ch. xxxvii.

5 A

† Tho' the Reason, which made the Patriarch, after he had forded the River to try if it was passable for his Family, return back again, and not go along with them, be not express'd by *Moses*; yet it is very natural to suppose, that he stay'd sometime behind his Family in this Place of Vision, which he afterwards call'd *Peniel*, to recommend himself, and them in Prayer, (as the Danger approach'd nearer and nearer) to the Protection of Almighty God. *Musc. Patrick, and Bibliotheca Bib.*

‡ The Words in the Text, according to our Translation, are, — *Thy Name shall be no more called Jacob, but Israel*; and yet it is certain, that this Patriarch was very frequently, nay, in the very next Verse but one, is called *Jacob*, and therefore this seeming Contradiction may be amended, by rendering the Words, instead of *no more*, *not only*; or, *not so much Jacob, as Israel*; because it is certain, that, in his Posterity at least (who were called *Israelites*, but never *Jacobites*) the latter Name abolish'd the former. *Israel* is certainly derived from the Word *Sar*, which (as St *Jerom* observes) signifies a *Prince*, with the *Jod*, which is the common Note of a proper Name; but then there is some Obscurity in our Translation, as to the latter Part of the Verse, *as a Prince hast thou Power with God, and with Men, and hast prevailed*; which should rather be translated, *Thou hast been a Prevailer with God, and with Men thou shalt also powerfully prevail*. This is the literal Version of the Words; is consonant to the *vulgar Latin*, *Onkelos*, and the *Septuagint*; and very justly expresses the true Sense of the Place. *Patrick's Commentary, and Shuckford's Connection*, Vol. II. lib. vii. cap. 7.



A. M. 2149, &c.  
Ant. Christ. 1855, &c.

† parted; *Eſau* went to *Seir*, and expected his Brother to follow him; but his Brother turned another Way, and, by eaſy Journeys, came to *Succoth* (which in *Hebrew* ſignifies *Booths*) and there intending to ſettle for ſome Time, he built an Houſe for his Family, and proper Conveniences for the Reception of his Cattle. But in a ſhort Time he removed from hence, and || ſafely arriv'd at *Shechem*, where having purchaſed a Piece of Ground of

*Hamor*, the Father of *Shechem*, for an hundred † Pieces of Money, he pitched his Tents in the Place, and there built an Altar to the Lord, whom he called *El Elobe-Iſrael*, or *the Mighty God of Iſrael*.

From Gen. xxviii. 10. to Ch. xxxvii.

HERE *Jacob* might have liv'd peaceably and happily, being beloved by all the People, had not \* *Dinah's* Curioſity of viſiting the Women of the City prov'd the Cauſe of much Miſchief, and oblig'd her Father

*Dinah's Rape and her Brothers Cruelty.*

† After this, *Moses* gives us no farther Account of *Eſau*, and his Family, only that he was aſſiſting at his Father's Funeral, and had three Wives, whereof it is proper to take Notice, that, when he barely mentions theſe Wives [as in Gen. xxvii. 34. and Gen. xxviii. 9.] he gives them quite other Names, than what he does, when he comes to ſpeak of the Poſterity, which *Eſau* had by them, Chap. xxxvi; which may lead an unwary Reader to think, that he had more than three, eſpecially when the Fathers of the two firſt are likewiſe called by different Names. Thus his firſt Wife *Judiſh*, the Daughter of *Beer*, is afterwards called *Adab*, the Daughter of *Elo* the *Hittite*; the Second, *viz.* *Bathſhema*, the Daughter of *Elo*, is again called *Aboli Baniab*, the Daughter of *Anab*, the Daughter of *Zibeon*, the *Hivite*; and the laſt, called in one Place *Mahalab*, is now called *Bathſhemah*; but what ſhews, that theſe two latter Names mean the ſame Perſon, and that the ſame Thing may be ſuppoſed of the other two, is, that, in both Places, ſhe is called the Daughter of *Iſmael*, the Siſter of *Nabajoth*. All the Account, that can therefore be given for this Difference, is, that they had two Names, and that it was uſual to call them, ſometimes by one, and ſometimes by another; in the like Manner, as we find the Mother of *Abijam*, King of *Judah*, in one Place called *Maacah*, the Daughter of *Abiſhalon*, [1 Kings xv. 2.] and in another, *Michaiab*, the Daughter of *Uriel* of *Giſeah*, [2 Chron. xiii. 2.] with many more Inſtances of the like Nature. After having taken this Notice of *Eſau's* Wives, *Moses* enumerates his Children, and ſome of their Deſcendants, the Princes of the Tribes of the *Edomites*; the Kings that ſucceeded them; and the Chiefs, who governed after the Kings; but as to the Order of Succeſſion, wherein they are to be placed, there is ſome Diſpute among the Learned. One Remark more, that we ſhall make, before we part with *Eſau*, is, that, all Things conſidered, he was not that very bad Man, which ſome would make him. His generous and open Temper appears in his affectionate Deportment towards his Brother, and his ſpeedy and utter Oblivion of the Sights, and Perfidies, he had receiv'd from him; and, tho' St Paul calls him a *prophane Perſon*, and ſays, that he was *hated by God*; yet, all that he means by the Word *Hatred*, is no more than a bare poſtponing. For, the Apoſtle's Purpoſe is to ſhew, that God had, all along, beſtow'd the Favours, which lead to the *Meſſiah*, on whom he pleas'd; on *Abraham*, not on *Lot*; on *Jacob*, not on *Eſau*; on the *Gentiles*, not on the *Jews*: And he therefore calls him *prophane*, not becauſe he was more wicked than other Men of his Age, but becauſe he ſeems not to have been ſo mindful of the Promiſes, made to his Family, as *Jacob* was, and conſequently was not ſo fit to be the Heir of the Mercies peculiar to it. *Universal Hiſtory*, l. i. c. 4. and *Shuckford's Connection*, Vol. II. c. 7.

|| The Words in our Translation are, that *Jacob* came to *Shalem*, a City of *Shechem*: But, beſides that there was no ſuch Place as *Shalem*, in the Conſines of *Shechem*, (which ſeems itſelf, at this Time, to have been but a ſmall Town, without any dependant Villages) ſince the Word *Shalem* is ſo frequently taken *adjectively*, to denote any Thing *ſafe and ſound*, as we call it, and as *Onkelos*, and ſome of the beſt *Jewiſh* Interpreters, have it; it may very properly be render'd ſo here. And this *Soundneſs*, as ſome imagine, may have Reference to *Jacob's* Halting, which was perfectly cur'd before he reach'd *Shechem*; as his *Safety* has Reſpect, either to his having eſcap'd all Danger, at his Interview with his Brother, or, rather, to his having met with no evil Accident of any Sort, ſince he left *Laban*: And this Obſervation *Moses* might the rather be induced to make, becauſe he was juſt going to relate a ſad Diſaſter, that, not long after his Arrival at *Shechem*, beſel his Family. *Shechem* (by the bye) otherwiſe called *ſichar*, was a City of *Samaritan*, ſituate among the Mountains belonging to the Tribe of *Benjamin*, ten Miles from *ſhilob*, forty from *Jeruſalem*, and fifty-two from *Jericho*, near which was *Jacob's* Well, or Fountain, where our bleſſed Saviour enter'd into Converſation with the *Samaritan* Woman, *John* iv. 7. *Le Clerc's* and *Patrick's* Commentary. *Calmet's* Dictionary, and *Wells's* Geography of the Old Teſtament.

† The Word *Kepſitab*, which is here rendered a Piece of Money, ſignifies likewiſe a Lamb, from whence the *Septuagint*, *Vulgate*, *Oleaster*, and others, have translated it an hundred Lambs: But ſince, long before this, Money was in Uſe, and made the Inſtrument of Traffick, [Gen. xxiii. 16.] which muſt, of Courſe, deſtroy the Method of exchanging one Commodity for another, it is much more probable, that it was ſome Sort of Coin (tho' of what Value it is uncertain) which had a Lamb ſtamped upon it, and was called by that Name, as we do call an *Angel*, from the Stamp it bears of one. *Universal Hiſtory*, l. i. c. 7. and *Patrick's* Commentary in Locum.

\* At what Time this Miſfortune happen'd to *Dinah*, the Scripture gives us no Account: It is preſum'd however, from the bold Exploit of her two Brothers to avenge her Diſhonour, (which implies that they were Men grown) that ſhe could not be leſs than fifteen or ſixteen Years of Age; and the Occaſion of her running herſelf into this Premunice, *Joſephus* tells us, was a great Feſtival, then held at *Shechem*, which ſhe, deſirous to ſee the ſine Sights, and Faſhions of the Place, adventur'd to go to. *Antiq.* l. i. c. 21.



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to withdraw. *Shechem*, the Son of *Hamor* the *Hivite*, who was Prince of that Country, saw her, fell in love with her, and, having gain'd a secure Opportunity, ravish'd her. But, notwithstanding this dishonourable Act, his Soul was so enamour'd with her Charms, that he desir'd nothing more earnestly, than to marry her; and, to this Purpose, prevail'd with his Father to enter upon a Treaty with her Friends. *Jacob* soon heard of the Rape committed upon his Daughter, but concealed the Matter until his Sons were come home; and when he had made them acquainted with it, their Resentment grew to such an Height, that they vowed severely to revenge the Dishonour done unto their Family. In the mean Time, *Shechem* having prevail'd with his Father to obtain him the Damsel, they both went together to make the Proposal to her Father; promising to give her as large a \* *Dowry*, and her *Relations* as costly Presents, as he should desire; and alledging withal, that, if his Family were to intermarry with the *Shechemites*, it wou'd prove the most effectual Means to make them both live together in perfect Harmony and Friendship. This was a fair Offer; but the treacherous Sons of *Jacob*, who meditated nothing but the most bloody Revenge, made them this Reply: "That it was not lawful for them to contract an Affinity with any *uncircumcised* Nation, but that, if he, and his People wou'd consent to be circumcised, as they were, they would then come into his Proposal."

*HAMOR* and *Shechem* agreed very

readily to this Condition; and, when they returned to the City, and had convened the Inhabitants, "They commended the *Israelites* highly for a peaceable and good-natur'd People, from whom they might reap many great Advantages, and, in Process of Time, make all their Substantance (which was very considerable) their own, if they were to intermarry with them; but that this would not be done without a general Consent to be circumcised." How averse soever the People might be to such an Operation at first, yet the *Thirst of Gain*, joined with the powerful Interest, which *Shechem* had among them, soon won their Consent, in-somuch, that, on that very Day, every Male of them was circumcised. But, \* three Days after this, when their Wounds had made them incapable of making any Resistance, *Simeon* and *Levi* entered the City, and, having put all the Men to the Sword, made Search in *Shechem's* House, where they found their Sister *Dinah*, and brought her away. After which, they re-entered the Town, plunder'd the Houses, took both Women and Children Captives, and carried away all the Cattle that they found in the neighbouring Places.

*JACOB* was much concern'd at the furious Proceedings of his Sons, for which he justly reprov'd them. He was apprehensive indeed, that the Inhabitants of the Land would unite against him, and destroy his Family, for this violent Outrage: But *Simeon* and *Levi*, who were the chief Actors in the Tragedy, were so warm'd with the Thoughts of the Dishonour done to their Sister and Family, that they did

not

From Gen.  
xxviii. 10. to  
Ch. xxxvii.

*Jacob's Removal to Bethel.*

\* This shews more fully, that the Custom of those Times was (as we noted before) for Men to give Money for their Wives, and to give it generally to their Parents. The Money, or Presents so given, were by the *Greeks* called *ἐξδνα*; for so we find *Vulcan*, when he had caught his Wife *Venus* in an Act of Incontinency, telling her, and her *Paramour*, that he would not let them go.

Ἔισον μοι μάλα πάντα ματὴρ ἀποδώσει ἐξδνα,

Ὅσσά οἱ ἐγγυάλιξα κινάπιδ' εἶνεκα κέρους.

Hom. Odyss. 8.

But there was a greater Reason for a *Dowry* now, and a large one too, that he might make Compensation for the Wrong he had done. There is to be observ'd however, a natural Equity in the subsequent Laws of *Moses* (Exod. xxii. 16. and Deut. xxii. 28.) by which a Man was bound to make Satisfaction to the Father, if, either by Inticement, or Violence, he had abused his Daughter. *Le Clerc's* and *Patrick's* Commentary.

\* The third Day, as *Physicians* take Notice, was the Time, when Fevers generally attended *Circumcision*, occasion'd by the Inflammation of the Wound, which was generally more painful then (as the *Hebrews* observe) than at any Time else; and for this Reason, the Sons of *Jacob* took the Opportunity of falling upon the *Shechemites*, when they were least of all in a Condition to defend themselves. *Hewel's* History.



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not think they had carried their Resentment, in the least, too far for so base an Injury. *Jacob* however thought it advisable, for his own Security, to tarry no longer there, but to shift into some other Part of the Country. And accordingly, having received particular Directions from God to remove to *Bethel*, and there to build an Altar, (whereon to perform the Vow, which he made, when he fled from his Brother *Esau*) he set his Resolution to go thither : But, before he did that, being willing to carry nothing, that might be offensive to God, to so sacred a Place, he found it necessary to make a Reformation in his Family. To this Purpose he commanded all that proposed to go along with him, to bring out their *Idols* ; which they not only

did, but gave up their \* *Ear-rings* like wife, which they were used to wear, as Spells or Amulets against Sickness, and other Misfortunes. These he took, and buried privately in a deep Hole, which he caused to be dug under an Oak near *Shechem*, and so having purified \* themselves, even to the washing and changing of their Garments, they set forward to *Bethel*, and arrived there safe, and without any Disturbance, because God had struck such a Terror into the Cities round about them, that, notwithstanding the late Provocation in the Matter of *Shechem*, No-body offered to molest or pursue them.

From Gen.  
xxviii. 10. to  
Ch. xxxvii.

As soon as *Jacob* came to *Bethel* (where *Deborah*, his Mother's Nurse, happened to die) he erected an Altar, as God had commanded

\* It was a Custom, in several Countries, for the Men as well as the Women, and for the meaner as well as the better Sort, to wear Ear-rings ; and therefore we find *Plautus* in his Play, called *Pœnulum*, Act 5. taking this Notice of some *Carthaginian* Slaves ——— That their Hands should be without Fingers, one would think, because they wore their Rings in their Ears. But, besides the Rings design'd for Ornament, it was a common Thing for idolatrous Nations to wear others for superstitious Uses. These (as some say) were made in Form of a *Semicircle*, and reached over the Forehead from Ear to Ear. They had astronomical Characters and Signatures engraven upon them, and to them they imputed a thousand supernatural Virtues. They were always dedicated to some false Deity ; and therefore *St Austin*, in several Places, exerts himself, with a becoming Zeal, against such impious Fooleries, and tells his Countrymen, the *Africans*, (among whom this Custom had got some Footing) that, in this execrable Superstition, as he calls it, they did not design to dress themselves out to please Men, so much as to serve and please Devils. And therefore *Jacob* was highly to be commended for destroying these Relicks of Idolatry, which his Haste to be gone, both according to God's Command, and his own Apprehensions of Danger, made him bury under Ground, rather than stay to melt them down. *Le Clerc's* and *Patrick's* Commentary. *Heidegger's* Hist. Patriar. Vol. II. Exercit. 13. and *Calmet's* Dictionary under the Word *Rings*.

\* The Manner, wherein *Jacob* requir'd of his Domesticks to purify themselves, was, by washing their whole Bodies, and putting on clean and fresh Apparel : And, that this was a Custom among other Nations, as well as the *Jews*, when they set about any solemn and religious Office, is plain from that Passage in *Euripides*, where *Alceſtis*, being to perform some holy Rites in Behalf of her Children,

ὕδασι ποταμίῳ λευκὸν χροῶ  
'Ελευσάτ', ἐν δ' ἐλῦσα κεδρίων δάμων  
'Εδῆτα, κίσμοντ', εὐπρεπᾶς ἡσκήσατο.  
καὶ εἶσα ἀροθὲν ἐστίας καλῆνξατο.

ALCESTIS, Act I.

But of all other Nations, the *Egyptians* (as *Herodotus* tells us, l. 1. c. 37.) and more especially their Priests, were most remarkable for this Sort of Cleanness. " They shav'd their Bodies all over every third Day : They bathed themselves in cold Water twice a Day, and twice a Night ; and wore constantly nothing but Linnen Vestments, and " Shoes made of *Papyrus*, for this Reason, I suppose, because they were the most proper to be wash'd." Not that we are to suppose, that God respects a Worshipper for his spruce Appearance, so long as his Conscience is polluted within. In Sordidness indeed there is something distasteful, and 'tis an unseemly Thing to appear before a great Man in dirty Apparel : But the principal Design of God's appointing this outward Cleanliness, was, to be a Sign, and Memorandum to the Person approaching his Presence, what the inward Temper and Complexion of his Mind should be ; and therefore we find the *Royal Psalmist*, in Allusion to this very Custom, declaring his pious Purpose, *I will wash my Hands in Innocency, and so will I go to thy Altar.* Psal. xxvi. 6. *Le Clerc's* and *Patrick's* Commentary.

|| In Gen. xxiv. 59. we read, that *Deborah* went along with her Mistress *Rebekah*, when *Isaac's* Steward was sent to conduct her out of *Mesopotamia* ; how is it then, that we find her here in *Jacob's* Retinue so long afterwards, and when he was returning from the same Place ? The *Jewish* Doctors tell us, that *Rebekah*, having promised her Son, at his Departure, that she would send for him again, as soon as she found him out of Danger, did now send *Deborah* to fetch him back. But, besides that a younger Messenger would have been much more proper, we do not find that *Jacob* was sent for, but that he left the Country, by God's Appointment, and upon the bad Usage of his Father-in-law. Some *Christian* Commentators are therefore of Opinion, that, after she had brought her Mistress *Rebekah* to her Marriage, and seen her well settled in her Family, she went back to *Haran* again, and there dwelt in *Laban's* House,



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commanded him, whereupon he performed his Vow; and, not long after, God appeared to him again, confirming the Change of his Name, and giving him fresh Assurances of his Design to multiply his Posterity, and to give him the Inheritance of the Land of *Canaan*; which induced him to erect a Pillar of Stone (whereon he poured a *Drink-offering*, and *Oil*) as a lasting Monument of his Gratitude and Devotion.

Rachel's  
Death and  
Burial.

THE Desire, which *Jacob* had to visit his aged Father, made his Stay in *Bethel* not long: And therefore removing from thence, he intended to have reached † *Ephrah*, (which was not far distant) that Night, but was prevented by *Rachel*'s falling in Labour of her second and last Child, for of him she died, as soon as she was delivered, and had just Time to name him *Benoni*, i. e. the *Son of Sorrow*; but his Father, unwilling to perpetuate the Remem-

brance of so melancholy a Subject, called him † *Benjamin*, which signifies *the Son of my Right-hand*, or *my Strength*. She was buried in the Way to *Ephrah*, where her Husband built \* a Monument of Stone over her Grave, which the sacred Historian tells us was extant in his Days. But this was not the only Misfortune which attended *Jacob* in this Place; his eldest Son *Reuben*, having taken a Liking to *Bilhah*, the concubinary Wife, which *Rachel* had given him, made no Scruple to commit Incest with her, which Thing grieved his Father so, that, though he forbore taking any present Notice of it, yet he could not but (a) resent it at his dying Hour. Soon after this *Jacob* left this melancholy Place, and came at length to *Mamre*, the Place of his Father's Abode, who was doubtless not a little overjoyed at the Return of his Son, after so long an Absence.

From Gen.  
xxviii. 10. to  
Ch. xxxvii.

The

House, 'till, upon *Jacob*'s returning home, she, having a Desire to see her old Mistress once more, put herself under his Convoy. Others again suppose, that *Jacob* had been at his Father's House before this Time; or that, after *Rebekah*'s Death, *Deborah*, hearing of his Return into *Canaan*, might be desirous to spend the Remainder of her Life with his Wives, who were her Countrywomen. Any of these Conjectures may be sufficient to solve Difficulty of her being found in *Jacob*'s Family; and the Reason, why *Moses* takes Notice of her Death, is, not so much because it was a Circumstance of Moment enough to be preserv'd in History, as that it was of Use to assign the Reason, why the Oak, near which she was buried, and which perhaps was still standing in his Days, came by its Name. But what will, in some Measure, serve, both to vindicate the sacred Historian, and to shew, at the same Time, how much these Nurses, and Women, who had the Care and Education of Persons of Birth and Quality, were honour'd and esteem'd in those early Days, is a Passage, upon the like Occasion, in the Poet *Virgil*.

Tu quoque littoribus nostris, *Aeneia* Nutrix,

Æternam moriens famam, *Caieta*, dedisti.

Et nunc servat honos sedem tuus, ossaque nomen

*Hesperia* in magna (si qua est ea gloria) signat.

*Æneid.* 1. 7.

† This Place was afterwards called *Bethlehem*, a City about two Leagues distant from *Jerusalem*, famous for the Birth of *David*, King of *Israel*, but infinitely more so, for the Birth of *Christ*, the Son of God, and Saviour of the World. *Calmer's* Dictionary.

† From the different Names, which the Father and Mother gave this Son of theirs, some have observ'd, that Names are oft-times strangely adapted to Things, and the Presages of Parents have antiently been observ'd to be fulfilled.

Heu nunquam vana parentum

Auguria

which was certainly no where more, than in the Fate of *Benjamin*'s Posterity, since no Tribe in *Israel* was more valorous, and yet none more subject to Disasters, than *his*; since it was almost quite extirpated in the Time of the Judges, Ch. xx. and yet, before the Conclusion of that Age, became so powerful, as to have the first King of *Israel* chosen out of it. *Patrick's* Commentary.

\* The learned *Bochart* is of Opinion, that this Monument of *Rachel*'s (which is the first, that we read of in Scripture) was a Pyramid, curiously wrought, and raised upon a Basis of twelve large Stones, whereby *Jacob* intended to intimate the Number of his Sons. It was certainly standing in the Time when *Moses* wrote, Ver. 20. and, just before *Saul* was anointed King, there is some mention made of it, 1 Sam. x. 2. But that the present Monument cannot be the same, which *Jacob* erected, is very manifest from its being a modern and Turkish Structure. Mr *Le Brun*, who was at the Place, and took a Draught of it, says, that the Tomb is cut into the Cavity of a Rock, and cover'd with a Dome, supported by four Pillars, on Fragments of a Wall, which open to the Sepulchre. The Work is rude enough, and without any Ornament; but the whole is as entire, as if it had been but just made, which makes it hard to imagine that it has subsisted ever since *Jacob*'s Time. *Maunderell's* Travels, and *Calmer's* Dictionary.

(a) Gen. xlix. 4.



A. M.  
2149, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1855, &c.

From Gen.  
xxviii. 10. to  
Ch. xxxvii.

## The OBJECTION.

“ **I**T cannot be denied indeed, but that  
“ *Laban* dealt very treacherously with  
“ his Son-in-law, (after he had undergone  
“ so long a Servitude for his *Mistress*) in  
“ palming one Daughter upon him instead  
“ of another ; but still it must be con-  
“ fessed, that *Jacob* was more than even  
“ with him, in the Manner of enriching  
“ himself, by supplanting his Father-in-  
“ law of the best of his Cattle. *Laban*,  
“ to be sure, understood the Bargain in  
“ the most obvious and natural Sense of  
“ the Words. By *these* *Jacob* was to give  
“ up to him all the Lambs and Kids, that  
“ were *white*, and to reserve to himself  
“ those, that were *party-coloured*. There  
“ was no Suspicion of using any Art in  
“ this Case : He meant no more, than a  
“ bare *casual* Production, and *Jacob*, to  
“ make him believe he intended the same,  
“ lays his Hand on his Heart, as it were,  
“ and hopes that *his Righteousness* would  
“ answer for him in the Time to come :  
“ But, notwithstanding all this Air of Ho-  
“ nesty, we find him betaking himself  
“ to an Artifice, which, he knew, would  
“ do the Work ; tho’ it badly became an  
“ honest Man to study how to *outwit*  
“ another, who dealt upon the *Square*,  
“ and had no Suspicion of any fraudulent  
“ Reserves in the Bargain.

“ **B**UT well might he be deem’d per-  
“ fidious to Man, when we find him  
“ making a Vow to God, conceived in  
“ Terms that seem *mercenary* enough, and  
“ as if he were insisting upon Conditions  
“ with the Almighty ; and yet neglecting,  
“ for many Years, to perform it, though  
“ God had abundantly made good the  
“ Covenant on his Part, and brought him  
“ in Triumph, as it were, into the Coun-  
“ try, and within the very Confines of  
“ the Place, where the Vow was made ;  
“ when, notwithstanding all these Bles-  
“ sings from the divine Bounty, we find  
“ him tamely permitting Idolatry, and

“ *strange Gods*, to continue in his Family,  
“ and never once thinking of a Reforma-  
“ tion, until he was summon’d to appear  
“ before God ; when we find him be-  
“ traying the Rights of *Primogeniture*  
“ (which cost him some Perfidy to attain)  
“ in the abject Messages and Speeches, he  
“ made to his Brother ; violating the Laws  
“ of *Chastity* in the *incestuous* Marriage of  
“ two Sisters at once ; and (what looks  
“ very odd, as well as presumptuous) in  
“ daring to *wrestle*, and contend with his  
“ Maker.

“ **T**HERE is something so gross in the  
“ Notion of a Man’s *wrestling* with God,  
“ something so incongruous, so incompat-  
“ ible, that we should rather think it  
“ possible for his two Sons, *Simeon* and  
“ *Levi*, to attack a *whole* City, massacre  
“ the Men, plunder the Country, and take  
“ the Women and Children Captives, and  
“ all this with two pair of Hands, than  
“ for their Father *Jacob* to encounter,  
“ were it but a created Angel, and yet  
“ prevail.

“ **J**ACOB however, in the main,  
“ might be a very good Man, but we  
“ cannot but think that his Example was,  
“ in a great Measure, lost in his Family ;  
“ when we find his eldest Son violating his  
“ Father’s Bed (a Fact, which *Moses* might  
“ as well have omitted, if but for the Ho-  
“ nour of the *Jewish* Nation) and the two  
“ next imbruing their Hands in innocent  
“ Blood, and even prostituting the Credit  
“ of a *Sacrament*, to accomplish their *vin-*  
“ *dictive* Ends.

“ **S**HECHEM we allow might have  
“ suffer’d, and others, that were *accessary*  
“ in injuring the young Lady, and putting  
“ a Slur upon the Family ; but what Ac-  
“ count can we give for their murdering  
“ those, who had no Hand in the *Rape*,  
“ and for making free Booty of the Wo-  
“ men, who (had they known it) would  
“ have probably prevented it, and of the  
“ little



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“ little *Children*, who had no Notion  
“ wherein they had offended, and could  
“ give no Reason, why they were en-  
“ slav'd ?

“ WHAT Account indeed can be given  
“ for several other Actions in this Period  
“ of History ; particularly for *Rachel's*  
“ coveting of *Reuben's Mandrakes*, and  
“ purchasing them of his Mother at so  
“ odd a Rate ? Women, that are preg-  
“ nant, we know, have oftentimes the  
“ Cravings of their Appetites very unac-  
“ countable ; but this was not *Rachel's*  
“ Case, and therefore, one would think  
“ she should not so passionately have de-  
“ fired a *Fruit* (if it was a Fruit) which  
“ is known to be disagreeable to the  
“ Smell, and confessedly of so vile a  
“ Taste, that the meanest Peasant would  
“ refuse it.

“ WHAT Account can be given for her  
“ stealing away her Father's *Gods*, (such  
“ *Gods*, as no Man can inform us what  
“ they were) and, at the Expence of a  
“ Lye, hiding them from his Search ?  
“ Great Care did poor *Rebekah* take, to  
“ secure her darling Son from marrying  
“ into an *idolatrous* Family, and yet she  
“ seems not to have mended the Matter  
“ much, when she sent him into her *own*,  
“ wherein the very *Damsels* were found to  
“ be such *Bigots*.

“ To name but one more : What Ac-  
“ count can be given for that eager De-  
“ fire, which these patriarchal Matrons ex-  
“ press'd, to give their Handmaids to their  
“ Husbands, that by them they might  
“ have Children, rather than none at all ?  
“ 'Tis a Thing somewhat extraordinary,  
“ for a Woman to encourage her Hus-  
“ band's Adultery ; nor can we conceive  
“ how a Child, born of the Maid's Body  
“ can become the Right and Property of  
“ the Mistress, any other Way, than by  
“ Adoption, be it never so much (b) *born*  
“ upon her *Knees*.”

Answer'd, by  
showing that  
Jacob was not  
culpable in get-  
ting the best of  
Laban's Cat-  
tle to himself.

THE worst Accusation against our Pa-  
triarch, is, that of his *purloining* (as some  
may call it) or appropriating to himself

a considerable Part of *Laban's* Substance ; and Shame light on him, who pretends to apologize for this, in order to give Countenance to any *Trick* or *Collusion* in Matters of Commerce. The Scripture only relates the Fact, without either Cen-  
sure or Approbation : And we read it to wrong Purpose, if, because we find a Thing recorded of a Patriarch, and yet not censur'd by the holy Penman, we therefore immediately conclude it to be right (c). Men will be Men, full of Imper-  
fections, and govern'd by their Passions, so long as they live in this World ; nor are the *Examples*, propounded in Scrip-  
ture to beget in us Humility and Watch-fulness upon every Remembrance of hu-  
man Frailty, but the *Laws* contain'd therein, which *are true and righteous altogether*, to be the Rule and Measure of our Conduct. We readily grant there-  
fore, that this Action of *Jacob's*, consid-  
ered in itself, and according to the Rules of strict Justice, can hardly be vindicated ; but then we are to remember, that there was a much superior Agent, even the great Proprietor of the World, and who has an undoubted Right to transfer Possessions where he pleases, by whose Direction it was done.

FOR suppose we allow (what some great Men, both *Physicians* and *Philosophers*, are wont to maintain) that the Fancy of the Dam, in the Time of Con-  
ception, is of Power sufficient to influence the Form, and Shape, and Colour of the *Young*, and to produce the Effect, which it had upon *Laban's* Cattle ; yet we cannot imagine that *Jacob* knew any Thing of this Secret. Men had not as yet en-  
quir'd into the Powers of Nature, and Observations of this Kind were not much regarded. (d) Religion, and the Worship of God, was, in these Days, the *Wisdom of the World* ; and a Simplicity of Life, and Integrity of Manners more studied, than any curious and philosophical Spec-  
ulations. If Study and Philosophy had help'd Men to this Knowledge, how came  
*Laban*

From Gen.  
xxviii. 10. to  
Ch. xxxvii.

(b) Gen. xxx. 3.

(c) Scripture vindicated.

(d) *Shuckford's Connection*, Vol. II. l. 7.



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1855, &c.

*Laban* and his Sons to be utter Strangers to it? And yet, had they not been Strangers, they could not but apprehend, that *Jacob* might by Art *variegate* the Cattle, as he pleased, and would not therefore have made so weak a Bargain with him. They certainly therefore had no Notion that any such Thing could be done; neither had *Jacob* any Intelligence of it, when he made the Contract with *Laban*; but, being resolv'd to be contented with what the Divine Providence should allot him, he made choice of the *speckled* Cattle, merely to put an End to all Cavils about Wages, as not doubting but that God would so order Matters, that, in the Event, he shou'd have enough: And therefore his Words, *So shall my Righteousness answer for me in the Time to come*, are just as if he had said; (e) "I may be thought to have acted imprudently in naming this Hire, as if it were impossible for Cattle, that are all *white*, to bring forth any, but such as are like themselves; but, in the Result, it will appear, that God had respect to my just Dealing, and this you will plainly see, when you come to pay me my Wages."

BUT tho' *Jacob*, at first, might be ignorant of the Secret, yet we cannot deny, but that, after the Bargain was made, God might give him some Intimation of it, and perhaps might enjoin him to put it in Execution; and yet, after all, he might not apprehend any natural Efficacy in the Thing. Instances there are more than enough in Scripture of God's requiring Persons to perform such Actions, as might testify their Faith, and Reliance on his Promises, in order to receive such Blessings, as he intended for them. Thus *Naaman* the Syrian, when he came to beg of God a Cure of his Leprosy, was directed (f) to wash seven Times in Jordan. Washing in Jordan was to be an Evidence of his believing that God would heal him, and, upon his giving this Evidence, he was cur'd; which was the Case of *Jacob*

here before us. God had told him that (g) *he had seen all, that Laban had done unto him*, but that he would take Care that he should not hurt him; that all *Laban's* Contrivances to defraud him of his Wages he would turn so much to his Advantage, as that they should tend to the Encrease of his Prosperity; and then very probably (as a Token of his Belief and Dependance on him) he commanded him to take peeled Rods, and use them as he directed. *Jacob* believed, and did as he was commanded: But, all this while, he might no more think, that the peeling of Rods in green Boughs, and laying them in the watering Places, where the Flocks were to drink, was a natural Way to cause them to bring forth spotted and speckled young ones, than *Naaman* did, that washing in a River was a Cure for a Leprosy. But, even suppose the Case, that *Jacob* had the Notion, that party-coloured Rods might be a natural Means to produce party-coloured Cattle; yet, if he used them in Obedience to the divine Command, and not merely as a Means to enrich himself at the Expence of another, we cannot perceive wherein he was culpable. God Almighty determined to punish *Laban* for his Injustice, and to reward *Jacob* for his Fidelity. He revealed to *Jacob* the Manner, in which he design'd to bless him, and ordered him to do an Action, as a Token of his Reliance on him, for the Performance of his Promise. *Jacob* faithfully observed the Orders, that were given him, and the Event prov'd accordingly.

HERE was no Trick, no Circumvention in the Matter; tho' it must be allow'd, that, had it been lawful for any private Person to make *Reprisals*, the injurious Treatment he had received from *Laban*, both in imposing a Wife upon him, and prolonging his Servitude without Wages, was enough to give *Jacob* both the Provocation, and Privilege so to do. God Almighty however was pleased to take the Determination of the whole Matter

From Gen.  
xxviii. 10. to  
Ch. xxxvii.

(e) Bibliotheca Bibl. Vol. I.

(f) 2 Kings v. 10.

(g) Gen. xxxi. 12.



A. M. 2149, &c.  
Ant. Christ. 1855, &c.

Matter into his own Hands; and therefore the true Conclusion is, what *Jacob* himself expresses, in his Speech to his two Wives, *Ye know, that, with all my Power, I have served your Father, and your Father hath deceived me; but God suffered him not to hurt me. If he said thus, the speckled shall be thy Wages, then all the Cattle bare speckled; and if he said thus, the ring-streaked shall be thine Hire, then bare all the Cattle ring-streaked. Thus God hath taken away the Cattle of your Father and hath given them to me.*

His Vow vindicated, and the Reason of his delaying to pay it.

A MAN so highly favoured by God, and so sensible of his peculiar Goodness, can scarce be supposed capable of making any Vow with a mercenary View, or of neglecting to perform it, when made. The Vow, which the Patriarch made upon his Journey into *Mesopotamia*, is conceived in these Terms. *(b) If God will be with me, and keep me in this Way, that I go, and will give me Bread to eat, and Raiment to put on, so that I come again to my Father's House in Peace, then shall the Lord be my God; i. e. I will religiously worship and serve him: But it is an unfair Construction to say, that, unless God did bring him home in Peace, he wou'd not worship him. The Right, which God has to the Service and Homage of his Creatures, is absolute and unalienable: His Dominion, his Power, his Goodness, Covenant, and Promises, do all require this of us; and therefore the Words must mean, either that, besides God's natural Property in him, he should have also a farther Demand of Duty upon him, in consequence of this Vow; or (i) that he would perform some signal Service to him, and worship him with a more than ordinary Devotion, consecrating (as it follows) the Place, where he then stood, to his Honour; offering him Sacrifices; and giving him the Tenth of all he had, to maintain this Worship.*

SUCH is the Sense of the Vow; and the Conditions relating to it seem to denote the secret Wish and Desire of his Soul,

and not any express Stipulation with God. Man certainly cannot insist on Terms with his Maker, but he may desire, and humbly hope for a Supply of his Wants. More than this the Patriarch does not expect; and less than this God never intended to give. *Our heavenly Father knows that we have need of Food to eat, and Raiment to put on, and 'tis a Renunciation of our Dependance upon his providential Goodness not to ask them. To serve God for no Consideration, but that of his own Glory, is a Notion, that may well enough comport with our future exalted State, when we shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, and where our Service will always be attended with Vision; but, while we are invested with these weak and frail Bodies, they, and their Concerns will tenderly affect us, and God, who considers whereof we are made, expects no other, than that they should.*

CONSIDERING then the Circumstances, that *Jacob* was in, leaving now his own, and going into a strange Country, we need not much wonder that we find him solicitous for his daily Bread. *With his Staff he passed over Jordan; and when he returned with a great Retinue, the grateful Acknowledgment, which he makes upon that Occasion, he expresses in these Words; (k) I am not worthy of the least of all the Mercies, and of all the Truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy Servant; and a Temper like this would never have neglected to pay its Vows unto the most High, had not the Patriarch either met with Obstructions, that made it not safe for him to go, or waited, till God (who had all along conducted him hitherto) should direct him to go, to the Place appointed for such Oblation.*

BEFORE he came to that Place indeed, we are told that he *(l) commanded his Household, and all that were with him, to put away the strange Gods, that were among them. And from hence it may be presum'd, that there were several of his Family (and possibly Rachel herself) addicted to Idolatry,*

From Gen. xxviii. 10. to Ch. xxxvii.

The Reformation in his Family what.

(b) Gen. xxviii. 20, &c.

(i) Patrick's Commentary.

(k) Gen. xxxii. 10.

(l) Ch. xxxv. 2.



A. M.  
2149, &c.  
Ant. Chriſt.  
1855, &c.

try, which he might connive at; but this is a Mistake, which arises purely from the Faultiness of our *Translation*. There the Word *strange* is supposed to refer to Gods, and to be another Name for *Idols*: Whereas the Words, (*Elohei han-necar*) do properly signify *the Gods of the Stranger, that was among them*, i. e. the Gods of the *Shechemites*, whom they had taken Captive, and brought into *Jacob's* Family. This alters the Sense of the Words quite, and throws the Charge of Idolatry, not upon *Jacob's Household*, but upon the *Strangers*, that were in it. The Captives of *Shechem*, which his Sons had taken, were now to be incorporated into his Family, and put under new Restrictions. Whatever Singularities were in their Dress or Ornaments, or in the Rites and Usages of Religion, they had been accustomed to, these he intended to abrogate, and to reduce them all to the same Purity of Worship, and Simplicity of Life and Manners, which he design'd to keep up among them. And this is so far from being a Stain upon his Conduct, (as if he were a tame Con- niver at Impiety) that we find him undertaking the Reformation even of *Strangers*, as soon as they were come under his Roof, with a Spirit and Resolution, not unlike that of holy *David*, (*m*) *Mine Eyes look unto such, as are faithful in the Land, that they may dwell with me, and whose leadeth a godly Life, he shall be my Ser- vant.*

His sending to  
Esau, a Thing  
highly neces-  
sary.

SOME Writers have made it a Question, how *Jacob*, upon his Return home, should know where his Brother *Esau* dwelt, and why he should send him so humble and submissive a Message: But (*n*) we can hardly imagine that *Jacob* should be so imprudent, as to carry his Wives, Children, and Substance into *Canaan*, without knowing whether he might safely venture thither. 'Tis presumable therefore, that while he rested at *Gilead*, he sent Messen- gers to enquire, whether his Father was alive; what Condition he was in; how the People of the Land were affected to him;

I

and whether he might come, and live with Security near him. From these Messen- gers he might learn the Place of his Bro- ther's Habitation; and, when he found that he should meet with no Obstruction, if he could but reconcile *Esau* to him, he very prudently sent to him likewise, with an Intent (if he found him inexorable) to bend his Course another Way. And indeed, if we consider what had passed between *Esau* and *Jacob*, before the latter went from home, we shall soon find Reason enough why *Jacob* should send to him, before he adventur'd to come, and sit down with his Substance near his Father. *Esau* still expected to be his Father's Heir, especially as to his *Temporalities*; and therefore, if *Jacob* had returned home without *Esau's* Knowledge, this, at their Father's Death, would have laid the Foundation of a greater Misunderstanding, than ever: For *Esau* would then have thought, that his Brother had been in- veigling his Father, and drawing a great Part of his Substance from him. He could never have imagin'd, that any Person, in a State of *Servitude*, cou'd have acquir'd so large a Fortune; and therefore, when he came to see all that Wealth, (which he knew nothing of before) he must have concluded that he had defrauded him.

'Twas not from Pride or Vanity there- fore, or to gratify an ostentatious Humour, that *Jacob* sent his Brother an Account of his prosperous Circumstances; but, partly to recognize the Goodness of Providence, which had so prosper'd him, and partly to let him know, that he was not come to raise any Contributions, either upon him, or the Family; that he had brought his Substance with him from *Haran*, and was not going into *Canaan* to do him any Wrong.

The whole Design of this Interview with *Esau* was to procure a firm Recon- ciliation with him; and therefore it is no Wonder, that *Jacob* should make use of such Terms, as were most likely to ingratiate. He knew his Brother's rug- ged

From Gen.  
xxviii. 10. to  
Ch. xxxvii.

No Abjection  
in his Address.

(m) Psal. ci. 8, 9.

(n) Shuckford's Connection, Vol. II. l. 3.



A. M.  
2149, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1855, &c.

ged and haughty Temper, and consider'd him as a Person, who, by his Valour and Conduct, had rais'd himself to a Principality and Dominion, whilst himself, for twenty Years together, had liv'd in no better Capacity, than that of a Servant; and therefore he might justly think, that this Difference of Appellations did not misbecome their different Conditions of Life.

By the divine Direction indeed, he was constituted *Esau's Lord*, nor did he forego that Prerogative by calling himself *Esau's* Servant. *Lord* and *Servant* were no more then, than (what they are now) certain Modes of *Civility*, which pass'd between Persons of good Breeding, without ever adhering to their strict Acceptation; and therefore *Jacob* might make his Addressee to *Esau* in this Manner, without any Derogation to his spiritual Pre-eminence, and, confining himself to the Bounds of Nature, might reverence him as his elder Brother.

BUT, how jealous soever we may be of *Jacob's* Honour, 'tis certain that the Almighty approv'd of his Conduct, by himself interposing to bring about the desired Reconciliation. Before this Interview with his Brother, and while he lay under terrible Apprehensions of his Displeasure, (o) *the Angels*, we are told, met him. They met him, i. e. they shew'd themselves to him, to assure him of their Custody; and by and by we see what follow'd: (p) His Brother *Esau*, contrary to his natural Roughness, and avow'd Revenge, comes, and treats him in a most friendly Manner; which sudden Change in *Esau*, we may reasonably suppose, was occasion'd by one of those Angels, who appear'd; and, who working upon his Humours and Fancy, sweeten'd him into a particular Benignity of Temper, so that *Jacob*, by his humble and submissive Behaviour, gain'd his End.

THERE is this peculiar Hardship upon *Jacob*, that, in the Matter of *Leah*, he was perfectly impos'd upon; that he had

no Design of having any Communion with her; was contracted to her Sister; and, in all Probability, had he enjoy'd her first, would never have had Concern with any other. But the Misfortune was, that, in the other's nuptial Night, he had carnal Knowledge of her, and thereupon was induced to think, that he could not honestly leave her. Her Sister *Rachel* was all this while (bating Consummation) his lawful Wife, to whom he was contracted, to whom he was solemnly married; and therefore he cou'd not in Justice relinquish her neither. In this Dilemma he was, in a Manner, under a Necessity of adhering to both; and, as *Polygamy* was not at that Time interdicted, he thought he might do it without any Violation of the Laws of God. The only Question is, whether he did not incur the Sin of *Incest* in so doing? And to this some *Jewish* Doctors answer, that the Prohibition of Marriages, within such Degrees of *Consanguinity*, was restrain'd to the Land of *Canaan* only; and that therefore it was not unlawful for *Jacob*, in *Haran*, to take two Sisters, nor for *Anram*, in *Egypt*, to take his Father's Sister: And to this Purpose they observe farther, that in the *Mosaick* Law itself, and particularly in the 20th Chapter of *Leviticus*, where the Sentence of Excision is pronounc'd against incestuous Marriages, there is no Punishment assign'd to him, who shall marry two Sisters, which, as they will have it, was, for the Honour of *Jacob*, omitted. However this be, 'tis certain that there is no such Toleration under the *Christian* Dispensation; and therefore he, who pretends to pronounce any Thing upon a Case so singular, as this of our Patriarch's is, should consider the different State of Things, before the Promulgation of the Law; during the Obligation of it; and since the Commencement of the Gospel; which undoubtedly prohibits both a *Plurality* in Wives, and *Consanguinity* in Marriages, and requires of its *Potaries* the strictest Chastity, from a Consideration and Motive, which neither the

From Gen.  
xxviii. 10. to  
Ch. xxxvii.

*Jacob's Case  
in Relation to  
Polygamy,  
and Incest.*

*Law*

(o) Gen. xxxii. 1.

(p) *Young's Sermons*, Vol. II. Sermon 6.



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*Law of Nature*, nor the *Law of Moses*, knew any thing of ; (q) *Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a Price, therefore glorify God in your Body, and in your Spirit, which are God's.*

His Wrestling  
accounted for.

OF all the Adventures, which happen'd to *Jacob*, that of his *Wrestling* is deservedly reckon'd one of the strangest, and has therefore been made a Matter of doubt, whether it was a *real Event*, or a *Vision* only. (r) *Maimonides*, and some other *Hebrew*, as well as *Christian*, Interpreters, are of Opinion, that all this was transacted only in *Jacob's* Imagination. They suppose, that the *Patriarch*, being strongly possessed with the Sense of the Danger he was going to encounter, saw in a *Vision*, a Man coming to him, and who, after some Altercations, began to *wrestle* with him ; that the Conflict between them continu'd till Break-of-Day, when his *Antagonist*, not able to get the better, desired to be gone, &c. and that, as a Proof, that this Vision was more than an ordinary Dream, it seem'd to him, that the Angel touch'd his Thigh, and, in effect, as soon as he awoke, he found himself lame, probably by the Force of his Imagination.

IF this Explication be admitted, the whole Difficulty is at an End. 'Tis natural perhaps for a Man, under the Apprehensions of a dreadful Foe, to dream of *fighting* ; and to dream, at the same Time, that he comes off victorious, might be accounted an happy Omen. But it must be confess'd, that the *Analogy* of the Story, and more especially *Jacob's* Lameness, which was consequent upon his Conflict, will not suffer us to think that all this was only in a Dream. The more general therefore, and indeed the more rational Opinion is, that this Wrestling was *real*, and that *Jacob* was actually awake, when engag'd in it : But then the Question is, who the Person was, that did encounter him ?

ORIGEN, I think, is a little singular and no ways to be justified in his Conceit, when he tells us, that the Person, with whom *Jacob* wrestled, was an *evil Angel*, in Allusion to which he thinks that the Apostle grounds his Exhortation : (s) *Finally, my Brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the Power of his Might, for we wrestle not against Flesh and Blood, but against Principalities, against Powers, against the Rulers of Darkness of this World, against spiritual Wickedness in high Places.* But that *Jacob*, who, at this Time, was so immediately under the Divine Protection, should be submitted to the Assault of a *wicked Angel* ; that he should merit the Name of *Israel*, i. e. *Conqueror of God*, for overcoming such an one, or call the Place of Combat *Peniel*, i. e. the *Face of God*, in Commemoration of his Conflict with such an one, is very absurd, if not an impious Suggestion. Those, who espouse this Opinion, may possibly be led into it from a Thought, that the Person, here contending with *Jacob*, was an *Enemy*, and come with a malevolent Intent against him ; whereas nothing can be more evident, (especially by his blessing him before they parted) that he came with a quite contrary Design. (t) Among the People of the *East*, from whence the *Grecians* came, and brought along with them several of their Customs, *Wrestling* was an Exercise in great Vogue, as highly conducive to the Health and Strength ; and a common Thing it was, for two Friends, when they met together, to amuse and recreate themselves in this Way. The *Jewish* Doctors therefore seem to be much in the right, when they maintain, that the Person, who contended with *Jacob*, was a *good Angel* ; and, as their settled Notion is, that those heavenly Spirits sing, every Morning, the Praises of God, at the Approach of Day ; so the Request, which his *Antagonist* makes, (u) *Let me go, for the Day breaketh*, shews him to be one

From Gen.  
xxviii. 10. to  
Ch. xxxvii.

(q) 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.  
and Calmer's Dictionary.  
xxxii. 26.

(r) Vid. Heidegger's Hist. Patriar. Vol. II. Exercit. 17. and Le Clerc's Commentary.  
(s) Eph. vi. 10, 11, 12.

(t) Le Clerc's Comment in Locum.

(u) Gen.



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one of the angelick Host, who had stayed his prefixt Time, and was now in haste to be gone, in order to join the heavenly Choir: For the Prophet *Hosea*, I think, has determin'd the Matter very plainly, when, speaking of *Jacob*, he tells us that (x) *he took his Brother, by the Heel in the Womb, and by his Strength he had Power with God, yea he had Power over the Angel, and prevail'd.*

How *Jacob*, who was an hundred Years old, could be enabled to do all this, must be imputed to some invisible Power, that assisted him; (y) An Angel is here, in an extraordinary Manner, sent to encounter him, and he, in an extraordinary Manner, is enabled to withstand him. The whole Scene is contriv'd to cure him of his uneasy Fears, and a proper Medium to do this, was, to let him see, that an old Man might contest it even with an Angel, and yet not be foil'd; and the Power, he might reasonably conclude, which assisted him in this (if the Matter were to come to Blows with his Brother *Esau*) would so invigorate his little Army of *Domesticks*, as to make them prevail, and become victorious.

It was a common Custom among Eastern Nations (as appears from several Passages in Scripture) to convey the Knowledge of Things by Actions, as well as Words. To this Purpose we find *Zedekiah* (z) making him Horns of Iron, thereby to portend Victory to *Abab*; and *Elias*, ordering *Joash* (a) to strike the Ground with Arrows, thence to presignify his Triumph over the *Syrians*. Nay, even *Hannibal* himself, (as the Historian (b) tells us) perceiving that his Soldiers were not to be encourag'd with Words, made a publick Show for them, not so much to entertain their Sight, as to give them an Image and Representation of their own Condition. In like Manner, we may suppose, that God made use of this Expedient to cure *Jacob* of his Dejection; and

tho' *Moses* (who cannot be supposed to insert every Thing) says nothing of the Angel's giving him this Intimation, yet we find it (c) in *Josephus*, that, no sooner was the *Wrestling* ended, but a Voice called out to him, and said, "Comfort thyself in what thou hast done, for it is not a common Adversary, that thou hast foil'd, but an Angel of the Lord: Take it for a Presage therefore, that thy Posterity shall never fail, and that thou thyself shalt never be overcome."

O LORD God of my Father *Simeon*, to whom thou gavest a Sword to take Vengeance of the Strangers, who loosen'd the Girdle of a Maid to defile her, and polluted her Virginity to her Reproach: Therefore thou gavest her Rulers to be slain, so that they died in their Bed in Blood, being deceiv'd. Thou gavest their Wives for a Prey, and their Daughters to be Captives, and all their Spoils to be divided among thy dear Children, who were moved with thy Zeal, and abhorred the Pollution of their Blood, and called upon thee for Aid. (d) This is the Preface to the Prayer, which *Judith* makes to God, in the apocryphal Book, that goes under her Name. And indeed, were there no other Arguments to prove this Book *spurious*, this one Passage is enough, where we find the most abominable Massacre called a divine Work, and Perfidy, Murder, and Rapine, gilded over with the specious Names of Zeal for God, and Indignation against Vice. The Abhorrence, which *Jacob* express'd of the Cruelty of his Sons, the Sharpness of the Reproaches utter'd against them, the Remembrance of it, even to the End of his Life, and the Care he took to recapitulate it upon his Death-bed, give us a much juster Idea of it, than the Writings of some (e) *Rabbins*, who have undertaken not only to excuse, but even to commend it. As to the Probability of the Fact however, we are not to suppose, that, because *Simeon* and *Levi* are only mention'd,

From Gen. xxviii. 10. to Ch. xxxvii.

The Slaughter of the Shechemites, by Jacob's two Sons, censur'd, and in what Sense it was probable.

5 D

they

(x) Hof. xii. 3, 4.  
(b) *Livy*, lib. xxi.  
l. 7. c. 5.

(y) *Le Clerc's Commentary*.  
(c) *Antiq.* lib. i. c. 20.

(z) 1 Kings xxii. 11.  
(d) *Judith* ix. 2, &c.

(a) 2 Kings xiii. 18.  
(e) *Selden de Jur. Nat.*



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they therefore were the only Persons, who had any Hand in this wicked Exploit. They indeed are only mention'd, because, being own Brothers to *Dinah* both by Father and Mother, and, consequently, more concerned to resent the Injury done to her Honour, they are made the chief Contrivers and Conductors of it; but it is reasonable to think, that the rest of *Jacob's* Sons, who were old enough to bear Arms, as well as the greatest Part of his *Domesticks*, were engag'd in the Execution of it: Because it is scarcely conceivable, how two men alone should be able to master a whole City, to slay all the Men in it, and take all the Women Captives, who, upon this Occasion, may be supposed more than sufficient to have over-power'd them.

NOTHING is more known, and common in History, than to ascribe an Action (especially in *military* Affairs) to the chief Commanders in it, how many Under-agents soever they may think proper to employ: And we should deny *Moses* the common Privilege of an *Historian*, if we should account that a Fault and Omission in him, which, in other Writers of the like Nature (especially where they study *Brevity*) is reputed a great Beauty and Perfection. *Moses* however is far from pleading his Privilege in this Respect; for having made mention of *Simeon* and *Levi*, as the principal Leaders in the Action, he then proceeds and tells us, that (*f*) *the Sons of Jacob*, meaning the rest of his Sons, who were of competent Age (and with them very reasonably their Attendants) *came upon the Slain, and spoiled the City, because they had defiled their Sister.*

It by *Moses*  
takes Notice of  
*Reuben's* In-  
cest.

It is very remarkable of the *Jewish* Historian *Josephus*, that he gives us no Manner of Account of *Reuben's* Incest, for fear that his recording so vile an Action might leave some Blot of Infamy upon that Patriarch, and his Posterity. But *Moses* has given us a better Proof of his

Truth and Integrity, in that he not only mentions this Abomination once, but even, in the Benediction, which his Father gives *Reuben*, makes a Remembrance and Recital of it. And this he did, that he might give us a true Account, why the Right of Inheritance, which was originally in him, came to be conferr'd on *Joseph*; and the *Kingdom*, or Right of Dominion, which was forfeited by his Transgression, came to be translated to the Tribe of *Judah*. This he did, that he might furnish his Countrymen with Matter sufficient for their *Humiliation*, who, by this, and many more Instances of the like Nature, are given to understand, that it was not their *Merit*, but purely God's *Mercy*, which advanced them to the Honour of being his *peculiar People*; and this he did, that he might acquaint us all, how God was pleased to make these great, these elect Heads and Fathers, Instances of human Frailty and Sin, in order to shew, that there is nothing, even nothing in Man, unless God by Grace be with him; that (*g*) *of ourselves* (as the Apostle words it) *we are not sufficient to do any Thing, as of ourselves, but all our Sufficiency is from God.*

From Gen.  
xxviii. 10. to  
Ch. xxxviii.

FOR the same Reason, we may imagine, it was, that *Moses* makes mention of *Rachel's* stealing away her Father's *Gods*, as a probable Intimation, that she was not entirely cur'd of the idolatrous Superstition of the Country, from whence she came.

THE *Jewish* Doctors are generally agreed, that the Word *Teraphim*, which we render *Gods*, is not of *Hebrew* Extraction. The *Septuagint* translates it sometimes an *Oracle*, and sometimes *vain Idols*; and several *Commentators* will have it to be a Word borrow'd from the *Egyptians*, and to import the very same with their *Serapis*. (*b*) The *Jews* indeed pretend that this Idol was the Head of a first-born Son, pluck'd off from the Neck, and embalm'd; under the Tongue of which was fasten'd a *golden Plate*, with the

Why *Rachel*  
stole away her  
Father's Idols,  
and what they  
were.

(f) Gen. xxxiv. 27.

histoire des Cultes & des Dogmes.

(g) 2 Cor. iii. 5.

(b) *Calmer's* Dictionary, and Commentary; & *Jurieu*, *His-*



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the Name of some false Deity engraven upon it; which, being plac'd in a *Nitch*, with lighted Candles before it, gave vocal Answers to such as came to consult it: But others rather think that it was the same with what the *Persians* call *Telephim*, more generally known by the Name of *Talismans*, i. e. Images, in human Form, of different Sizes, and different Metals, cast under certain *Constellations*, with the Figures of some *Planets*, and magical Characters, engraven upon them; Whereas others again are of Opinion, that the *Teraphim*, which *Rachel* stole, were the *Dii Penates*, or *Household-Gods* of her Father *Laban*, viz. the Images of *Noah*, the Restorer of Mankind, and of *Shem*, the Head of his Family; and therefore they observe, that *Laban*, by way of Distinction, calls them *his Gods*, i. e. the Gods of his *Family*. That these *Teraphims* were Statues, or Images of an human Shape and Figure, is manifest from (i) *Michal's* putting one of them into her Husband's Bed, when she favour'd his Escape: That, at their first Institution, their Intent was innocent, to be Emblems or Representations only of some renowned Ancestor, whose Memory the Family was desirous to perpetuate; but that, in Process of Time, they came to be look'd upon, as the *Lares*, or *Dii Tutelares* of the House, were made Objects of religious Adoration, and at length perverted to all the vile Purposes of *Necromancy*, a learned Author, (k) who has examin'd this matter to the full, has prov'd beyond Exception.

BUT whatever Men or fictitious Deities these Figures were made to represent, 'tis certain, that the Use, they were chiefly applied to, was, to foretel future Events, and discover what was hid or lost, and, for this Purpose, were consulted and prayed to as *Oracles*, at certain Times, and under some particular *Aspects* of the Planets. Among other Reasons therefore, for *Rachel's* stealing away her Father's *Teraphim*, this is generally supposed to be one, — That he might not, by enquiring of them, gain

Intelligence which Way it was, that *Jacob* had taken his Flight.

THE Truth is, there seems to have been in *Laban* an odd Mixture of Religion. In his Conversation with *Abraham's* Steward, when he came to negotiate a Match for *Isaac*, he seems to express a very devout Sense of the *Being* and *Providence* of God; and yet, at his first coming up with *Jacob*, he seems to be chiefly solicitous for the Loss of *his Gods* (as he calls them) which were but dumb and senseless *Idols*. In the Treaty, which he makes with *Jacob*, he invokes the God of *Abraham*, which is allow'd to be the great God of Heaven and Earth; and yet we can hardly forbear thinking, that he must have believ'd a *Plurality* of Gods in Subordination to the *Supreme*, by Reason of his anxious Concern for these Images. *Jacob* no doubt, during his Abode with him, used all the Interest, he had in the Family, to rectify his Notions, and convince him of his Error, but he was not able to prevail; and therefore some imagine that *Rachel* stole away his *Idols*, that she might remove the Occasion of his superstitious Worship, and hinder him from going on in his Impiety.

THESE *Idols*, we may presume, were made of *Gold*, or some very valuable Substance; and therefore it may be supposed that she took them along with her, not only to destroy them, but to make herself a Reparation likewise for the Wrongs she had receiv'd from him, and whereof we find both the Sisters making this Complaint, (l) *Is there yet any Portion or Inheritance for us in our Father's House? Are we not counted of him Strangers? For he hath sold us, and hath quite devoured also our Money.*

BUT, even supposing the worst of the Case, that *Rachel* did take with her these *Idols*, because she still retain'd an Hankering after the Religion of her Ancestors; yet *Jacob* is not to be discommended for marrying one of his own Family, who adher'd to the true Worship of God, tho' mix'd

From Gen.  
xxviii. 10. to  
Ch. xxxvii.

(i) 1 Sam. xix. 13.

(k) Jurieu, Histoire des Cultes & des Dogmes.

(l) Gen. xxxi. 14, 15.



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mix'd with some superstitious Customs, which he might easily reclaim in Time; rather than any of the *Canaanitish* Line, which was every Day sinking more and more into Idolatry, and for that Idolatry, and other flagitious Practices, were, in Process of Time, to undergo an utter Excision: Especially considering, that, when he came into the Land of *Canaan*, where he had a full Liberty of acting as he pleas'd, he made a thorough Reformation in his Family, and had all these little *Emblems* of her former Superstition taken from her, and destroy'd.

What Reuben's Mandrakes were, and why Rachel coveted them.

THE Word *Dudaim*, which we render \* *Mandrakes*, is one of those Terms, whose true Signification the *Jews*, at this Time, pretend not to understand. There is but one Place more in Scripture, wherein it occurs, and that is in the 7th Chapter of *Canticles*, wherein the *Bridegroom* invites his *Spouse* to go with him into the Fields: *Come, my Beloved, let us get up early to the Vineyards, let us see if the Vine flourish, whether the tender Grapes appear, and the Pomegranates bud forth. The Mandrakes give a Smell; at our Gates are all Manner of Fruits, which I have laid up for thee, O my Beloved.* Here we find it plac'd among the most delicious and pleasant Fruits, the Grape, the Pomegranate, &c. and represented as very fragrant and odoriferous in its Smell; but the *Mandrake*, say some, is a stinking and

ill-scented Fruit, of a bad Taste, and a cold narcotick Quality; and therefore they have render'd the Word *fine and lovely Flowers*; and some of them will have it to be the *Violet* or *Jessamin*, (which suit very well with the Season of the Year here mentioned) whilst others contend very strongly for the *Lilly*, which, in *Syria*, grew in the Fields, and was of a most agreeable Beauty and Smell.

THAT Passage in *Solomon's Song* however will not suffer us to doubt, but that it was a Fruit (of some Kind or other) and *Ludolff*, (k) in his History of *Ethiopia*, will needs have it to be what the *Syrians* call *Maux*, a Fruit, much about as big as a small *Cucumber*, that hangs in Clusters, sometimes to the Number of Forty upon the same Stalk, and is in Figure and Taste not unlike the *Indian Fig*.

IT is not to be doubted indeed, but that the *Mandrake* in *Palestine* is of a different Kind to what we have in these Climates. *St Austin*, who thought it a great Curiosity to see one, tells us, that it was very beautiful to the Eye, and of a fragrant Smell, but utterly insipid; so that he wonders what should make *Rachel* set so high a Value upon it, unless it were its Scarceness, and rich Scent. In the Province of *Peking* in *China*, we are inform'd, that there is a Kind of *Mandrake* so valuable, and, when mixed in any Liquor, makes so rich a Cordial, that a Pound of

From Gen. xxviii. 10. to Ch. xxxvii.

\* *Calmet*, in his Dictionary, gives us a Description of this Plant, as it is found in the *French King's Gardens*. — Its Root is white, and somewhat rough; is two or three Times as big again as its Stem, and always grows taper. Generally, at some Distance from its upper Part, it divides into two Branches, which is the Reason that this Root has something of the Figure of a Man, whose two Thighs are represented by the two Branches. From the Sides of the Root proceed a great Number of small Fibres, in several Places, which serve to imbibe the Juice of the Earth, for the Nourishment of the Plant. From the Root there arises a round and smooth Stem, of a pretty deep Red; and, at the Top of the Stem, grow four Branches, which spread, at equal Distances, from each other. Every Branch has five Leaves, which are indented, of a dark Green, and terminate in a Point. From the Center of these Branches proceeds another very strait and smooth Stem, at the Extremity of which grows a Knob of about twenty-four Fruits, round, and of a beautiful red; and within this Fruit is a kind of Nut, much of the Figure with a Lentil. This Nut includes in it the Seed of the Plant, which dies and grows again every Year, and has nothing valuable in it but the Root, whose Virtues are wonderful. Of this Plant (as *Dioscorides* informs us) there are two Sorts: One is black, and called the *female Mandrake*, having Leaves not unlike Lettice, tho' less, and narrower, which spread upon the Ground, and are of a very disagreeable Scent. It bears something like *Services*, which are pale, and of a strong Smell, with Kernels within, like those of a Pea. It has two or three very large Roots, twisted together, black without, but white within, and cover'd with a thick Rind. The other Sort, or the *male Mandrake*, produces Berries, as big again as those of the *Female*, of a good Scent, and a Colour not much unlike Saffron. Its Leaves are large, white, broad, and smooth, like the Leaves of a Beach Tree, and its Root resembles that of the *Female*, but is much thicker and bigger, and the Quality of them both is to *stupify* and make *sleepy* those that take it. Lib. 6. c. 61.

(m) Lib. i. cap. 17.



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of its Root (for in the Root lies all the Virtue) is worth thrice its Weight in Silver.

It was a general Opinion among the Antients, that there was a certain Quality in the Juice of *Mandrakes* to excite amorous Inclinations, and therefore they call them *the Apples of Love*, as the Hebrew Word *Dod* (from whence comes *Dodaim*) is frequently set to signify *Love*. Thus whether we consider this Fruit as pleasant to the Eye, Smell, or Taste, or as a Restorative to Nature, and helpful to Conception, any of these Reasons are sufficient, why *Rachel* should take such a Fancy to them: And, why she purchased them at so strange a Rate, was chiefly occasioned by *Leah's* sudden Reply, that she had taken away her Husband's Affections from her, which provok'd the other, who (according to the establish'd Order of succeeding to his Bed) had certainly the Property in him that Night, to resign him to her.

*Moses* however only mentions this Circumstance, to let his Reader know, upon what Occasion it was that *Leah*, after she had done Child-bearing, (as she thought) came to conceive again. (n) It had been below the Dignity of such a sacred History, as his is, to take notice of such trivial Matters, had there not been something of great Consideration in them; and what could that be, but chiefly the Birth of the blessed Seed, which was the Object of the Hopes of all pious People in those Days? It is evident from the Conduct

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both of *Rachel* and her Sister, that it was Children they desired, and not merely the Company of their Husband; nor would their Husband have ever been determined by their blind Bargains, had it not been Matter of pure Indifference to him, whether of their Embraces he went to, so long as his Family was but increased and multiplied.

THAT it was a very antient Custom, not only among the *Hebrews*, but with many other Nations, and particularly the *Greeks* and *Romans*, in the Marriages both of their Sons and Daughters, and especially of the latter, for the Parents to give with the *Bride* or *Bridegroom*, as Part of the Portion or *Dowry*, a Servant, to abide in their Power and Property, is a Matter so plain, \* from sundry Examples, that it needs no contesting. The great Difficulty is, — For what Reason it was, that these Matrons of old were so very desirous, that their Husbands should have Commerce with these their *dotal* Maids, in case they had no Children of their own: And for the Solution of this we must observe, that, according to the Principles of the oldest Philosophy, *SPRIT* is the universal efficient Cause in Nature, but especially in Generation, and in human Generation most of all; so that a *spiritual* Conception must of Necessity precede, and direct every *bodily* one, insomuch that there can be no *corporeal* Conception without a *spiritual* one, but a *spiritual* there may be, without a *corporeal* one, i. e. when the Matter, or Medium,

From Gen  
xxviii. 10. to  
Ch. xxxvii.

Why the Patriarchal  
Wives desired  
Children by  
their Maids.

5 E

is

(n) *Patrick's Commentary.*

\* In the Tragedy of *Euripides*, which is called *Iphigenia in Aulis*, *Clytemnestra* is brought in, as preparing and hastening all Things for the Nuptials of her Daughter, who, unknown to her, was devoted for a Sacrifice, and addressing herself in this Manner;

Πάρεμι νυμφαγωγὸς ἀλλ' ὀχημάτων  
Ἐξω πορεύεθ' ἄς φέρω φερὰς κόρη,  
καὶ πέμπωτε εἰς μέλαθρον εὐλαδύμεναι.

Æt III.

Old *Demetrius*, in the *Asinaria* of *Plautus*, is told by his Slave,

Dotalem servum Sauream uxor tua

Adduxit, cui plus in manu sit quam tibi.

Æt I.

These Servants among the *Greeks* were called *φέρναι*, (from whence is deriv'd the Latin *Verna*) and, by the *Romans*, *Dotales*, *Receptitii*, or *Receptitiae*. They had likewise the Name of *λάτρες* given them, and their Service was expressed by the Word *λατρεία*, which signifies the Service due from Man to Almighty God; which is wont to be distinguished from any other Sort of Service, and denotes, that such Persons were entirely at their Mistresses Devotion.

*Bibliotheca Bibl.* Vol. I. Annot. 32.



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is not adapted to that Purpose. Now this *Position* being laid down, it may be observed farther, that these *Matrons* very probably were not ignorant, that the Mother contributes nothing, of herself, towards the Formation of the *Fætus*, and, much less to its Inspiration with Life, but merely the Bearing it in the Womb; and hence they might infer, that the Bearing it in the Womb was not sufficient of itself to confer a *Right* to the *Fruit of it*, which came thither they knew not how, which they had no Hand in the Fashioning of, and which they were no more able to quicken, than they were to enliven a dead Body. It being therefore no strange Thing, in these Days, for one Man to raise up Seed for another, or to propagate by another; by Parity of Reason, they might conclude, that one Woman might as well do the same for another, or bear in her stead, under such and such Circumstances, by the Union and Co-operation of their Wills, and strong Attraction of the Imagination in two consociating into one. And this was the Consideration, which moved them to press this Matter so very earnestly, as they did: when finding, that, after they had *spiritually* conceived of their Husbands, by taking into them an *ideal* Image for Elaboration, there was wanting Strength in them to bear, and to work out what they had received; they could afterwards have no greater Pleasure, than to appoint one, who should faithfully supply that Part, (wherein they themselves were defective) and thereby be able not only to remedy the *Reproach* of their *Barrenness*, but to establish a stronger Interest in the Family for themselves, and for all, that they could call their *own*.

(o) *F I I E* bearing upon the *Knees* therefore (as the Expression is in *Moses*) must certainly denote something more, than that *Rachel* design'd to make herself a Nurse to her Maid, or set a Child upon her Knees, as her own, in which she had no

Part or Portion; but that her Servant should conceive, and become with Child through her, as in her Presence, and as it were upon her *Knees*, to the End that her Mistress might be made a Mother by her *Instrumentality*, and might have Children, whom she cou'd call her own, tho' not born of her Body. And, accordingly, we may observe, that *Rachel* herself had this Notion of the Matter; for, upon the Birth of her first Son, born to her by her *Substitute*, she expressly declares that God had given her a Son, and (as the Custom for Mothers then was) herself imposed on him a Name, as a Mark of her thinking him really to be *her's*.

Thus have we endeavour'd to silence some of those *Cavils*, which may be made against particular Passages in the *Mosaick* History, during this Period of Time; and, for the farther Confirmation of its Truth and Authority, we might produce the Testimony of several Heathen Writers, (p) such as *Sanctioniatho*, *Berosus*, *Hecataeus*, *Eupolemus*, and others, as they are quoted by *Eusebius* in his *Præparatio Evangelica*. The Fiction of *Jupiter's Chain* in *Homer*, reaching from Heaven to Earth, as it relates to the divine *Providence*, had its Original from *Jacob's Ladder*. The Memory of his Wrestling with an Angel has been preserv'd, ever since, by a whole Nation's abstaining from a particular Part of the *Thigh*, which, without that Supposition, cannot be accounted for. *Jacob's* living with his Uncle *Laban* in the Capacity of a Servant, gave Rise to the Story of *Apollo's* being reduced (when expelled from his Father's House) to the Necessity of turning *Admetus's* Shepherd. The Fable of the *Bethleams*, which (q) *Eusebius* takes out of *Philo Biblius*, came undoubtedly from the Altar of *Bethel*; and, to name no more, the whole Business of *Jacob's* Arrival at *Shechem* upon his Return from *Mesopotamia*, of his Daughter *Dinah's* Rape.

From Gen.  
xxviii. 10. to  
Ch. xxxvii.

Several of  
these Facts con-  
firm'd by Hea-  
then Writers.

(o) *Bibliotheca Bibl.* Vol. I. Occas. Annot. 33.  
l. 9. c. 21.

(p) *Vid. Grot. de Verit.* l. 1.

(q) *Præp. Evan.*



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Rape by the Prince of the Country, and of the terrible Revenge, which her Brothers took for that Indignity, are related by *Alexander Polyhistor*, as he is quoted

by the same Father, much in the same Order, and with the very same Circumstances, that we find it recorded in the Works of *Moses*.

From Gen.  
xxviii. 10. to  
Ch. xxxvii.

## DISSERTATION III.

### Of Jacob's Ladder and Pillar.

The Occasion of  
Jacob's Vision.

TO judge of the Occasion of *Jacob's* Vision, wherein this emblematical Ladder was represented to him, we must imagine, that we saw the Heir of a powerful Family taking his Leave of his aged Parents, and, for fear of an angry Brother, departing from his Father's House; beginning a Journey of 450 Miles, into a strange Country, all alone, on Foot, and without any Servant to attend him; travelling all the Day with a pensive Heart, and forc'd at Night to take up his Lodging in the open Air, and with nothing better, than an hard Stone to be his Pillow: If we suppose *Jacob* in this Condition, I say, we shall soon perceive the Reason, why God thought it convenient, at this Time, to give him Comfort and Consolation in the Way of a Dream.

THAT *Dreams*, or nocturnal Visions, were a common Way of God's revealing himself to Mankind of old, is evident from Instances almost innumerable; and the Reason of his making Choice of this Method might be, either (r) to convince them of his *Omni-presence*, that *he was about their Bed, and about their Paths, and spied out all their Ways*; or to convince them of his constant *Care*, and that he was not unmindful of them, even when they little thought of him, and were most absent from themselves; or to convince them of his unlimited *Power* over their Souls, when even Sleep itself could not hinder his Access to them; or because that the Mind, in the Dead and Silence of the

Night, was fitter to receive divine Impressions, when Nature was hush, and the Passions asleep, and no Variety of Thoughts to distract its Attention.

BUT, whatever God's Reasons might be for conveying Things by Dreams, 'tis certain, that the Vision of the Ladder, and the comfortable Words, which he spake from the Top of it, made such a lively Impression upon *Jacob*, that he proceeded in his Journey with Chearfulness and Alacrity. (s) *Behold I am with thee, and I will keep thee in all Places, whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this Land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that, which I have spoken to thee of*: These are the verbal Assurances, which God gives *Jacob*; and therefore we may presume that the Representation of the Ladder had something analogous in it.

THIS Ladder (according to the Sense of the (t) best Interpreters) is an Emblem of the divine Providence, which governs all Things. Its being set upon the Earth denotes the Steadiness of Providence, which nothing is able to unsettle; its reaching up to Heaven signifies its Universality, or that it extends to all Things; the several Steps of the Ladder are the Motions and Actions of Providence; the Angels going up and down shew, that they are the great Ministers of Providence, never idle, but always employ'd in the Preservation of the Just; their Ascending means their going up to receive the divine Orders and Commands; and their Descending

The Meaning  
of it.

(r) *Wafji* Miscell. sacra de Somniis, Vol. I.

(s) Gen. xxviii. 15.

(t) *Maimonides* More Nevuc.



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1855, &c.

*Descending* their coming down upon Earth to put them in Execution. So that, in this *Hieroglyphick*, God signified to *Jacob*, now full of Care and uneasy Apprehensions, that the Men, who was under the Custody and Protection of divine Providence, wanted not Company, in a Wilderness; wanted not Security, in the midst of Dangers; wanted not Direction, in the most difficult Undertakings; since there were so many *ministring Spirits*, holding Correspondence between Earth and Heaven, and daily and hourly (u) *sent forth* from God's Presence to minister unto them, who shall be Heirs of Salvation.

OTHER Interpretations there are in great Numbers, but too \* full of Fancies and Conceits, to be here taken Notice of: One however seems a little more solid, and may not undeserve our Observation. (x) The Promise, (we may remember) which God is introduc'd as making to *Jacob* from the Top of the Ladder, does chiefly relate to his Covenant with *Abraham*, which was principally founded in *Christ*, that chosen Seed, in whom all the Families of the Earth were to be blessed: And, the Analogy of the Thing may induce us to believe, that this Ladder was design'd for a Type and Emblem of the Covenant of Grace, which was in Force from the Time of Man's first *Apostacy*, but began to be put in Execution at the Incarnation of our Saviour *Christ*, that only Mediator, who open'd an *Intercourse* between Earth and Heaven; by whose Intercession Plenty of all spiritual Blessings

descend to us, and by whose Merits and Doctrines our Natures are *sanctified*, and so become meet to be *Partakers with the Saints in Light*, or to ascend into Heaven. And to this mystical Meaning of the Ladder, our Saviour himself may be thought to allude, when he tells us, that (y) *Hereafter ye shall see Heaven open, and the Angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man*; which (z) a learned Commentators has, in this Manner, *paraphrased*. "Ye have heard, no doubt, of those of Old, that several Things, relating to the *Messias*, have been present-ed by *Jacob's Ladder*; and ye are to know, that they are all now to be accomplish'd in me, and shall every Day be more and more accomplished, until the Time of my Assumption into Heaven. Ye shall know, that Heaven, which by the Sin and Corruption of Mankind was shut in *Adam*, shall, by my Dispensation and Doctrine, be opened again; and that God, being reconciled to the World by me, shall continue in Covenant with them for ever. Ye shall know, that I am that Ladder, and Way to Heaven, by which ye may gain Admittance to the Father; for I am he, that unites Heaven and Earth together, so that from henceforward the Angels shall continually be passing from the one to the other. In short, ye shall know, that I am the Lord not only of the *visible* Creation, but the Prince likewise of Angels, and all *invisible* Spirits, even the true God. This, I say, ye shall henceforth more fully

From Gen.  
xxviii. 10. to  
Ch. xxxvii.

(u) Heb. i. 14.

\* The Rabbins, having given us long *chimerical* Descriptions of this Ladder, will have it represent almost every Thing, that comes into their Fancies: Some pretend, that the *ascending* Angels were those, who had the Care of *Jacob* in his going; the *descending*, those, whose Business it was to secure him in his returning from *Mesopotamia*. Another [*Jarchi* on Gen. xxxviii. 12.] is of Opinion, that God design'd hereby to point out the Place, where he wou'd have the Temple built one Day; and, to reconcile this Opinion to *Geography*, he asserts, that God, at this Time, transported to *Luz* the Hill of *Sion*, upon which the Temple at *Jerusalem* was afterwards built. *Philo*, who certainly believ'd a *Metempsychosis*, tells us, that the Angels which *Jacob* saw, are Emblems of Souls, whereof some descend to animate Bodies, whilst others ascend, having quitted the Bodies, which they once animated. *St Austin* will have this Ladder to represent the Cross of *Christ*; and some of the mystical Divines, making it an Emblem of a contemplative Life, do maintain, that the Angels, ascending the Ladder, are those Believers, whom they call *perfect*, as having the Faculty of causing their Affections to soar up to the highest Heavens, and that the descending represented those mean and abject Souls, whose Center is the Earth, and whose Delight consists in fleshly Things. *Saurin's* Dissertations.

(x) *Heidegger's Hist. Patriarch.* Vol. II. Exercit. 16.

(y) John i. 51.

(z) *Bullinger's Commentary.*



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“ fully know by my Doctrine, my Miracles, my Death, my glorious Resurrection, and triumphant Ascension into Heaven.”

THUS, according to the Declaration, which God makes from the Top of the Ladder, it seems reasonable to imagine, that he might have a twofold Design in making this Representation to *Jacob*, viz. by a proper *Type*, to prefigure the Incarnation of his Son, which, like this Ladder, joined Heaven and Earth, the divine and human Nature together; and, by a proper *Emblem* of the Angels ascending and descending upon it, to give him an Evidence of the watchful Providence of God, that attended him. The former of these Designs might perhaps be a little too abstruse for *Jacob's* Comprehension at present, but the latter he immediately understood; and therefore we find him, as soon as he arose, (out of a grateful Sense of the divine Goodness in sending him a Vision so full of Consolation) erecting, and consecrating a Pillar, in order to perpetuate the Memory of so momentous an Event.

The Form and End of Jacob's Pillar.

IT is the Opinion of some *Commentators* indeed, that, to preserve the Memory of his heavenly Vision, *Jacob* took the Stone, whereon his Head lay, and wherein they discern nothing extraordinary, and set it up, for a Monument, or Pillar, upon the Top of some other Stones, which he had gathered, and heap'd together: But, besides that the Fancy of an Heap of Stones seems unworthy of the holy Scriptures, and betrays us into a low and trifling Idea of this great Affair; there is not the least Ground, from the Text itself, nor from this *symbolical* Way of transmitting Facts to future Generations, to suppose, that there was any more, than one single Stone.

THE Word *Matzebah*, which our Interpreters render a *Pillar*, is by the *Septuagint* translated Στήλη, by the *vulgar Latin*, *Titulus*; and from hence several, both Antients and Moderns, have supposed, that there was an *Inscription* upon this Pillar. The Manner of *consecrating* this Pillar was, by pouring Oil upon it, which *Jacob* might have by him, without a Miracle, (considering how common the Use of Oil was in these hot Countries) to refresh the Limbs, when weary with travelling, and how necessary upon that Account it was, to carry some with him in his Journey: Nor is there any Reason to suppose, that *Jacob* made use of this Form of *Consecration*, in Compliance with the Custom of the Country, where he then was. It is uncertain whether this Custom was establish'd in *Jacob's* Time; but, if it was, it is hardly credible, that a pious Man, as he is represented, would have adopted a superstitious Ceremony into the Worship of the true God. (a) The much more probable Opinion therefore is, that, as the Rites of *sacrificing* and *Circumcision* were instituted before the Promulgation of the Law; so this manner of consecrating Things, by Way of *Unction* or *Libation*, was at first enjoin'd the Patriarchs *Abraham* and *Isaac* by God, and, either by Precept or Tradition from them, came afterwards to be practis'd by *Jacob*. Nor is it unlikely, but that *Jacob's* Practice in this Particular, and the great Veneration, which was afterwards paid to his *monumental* Pillar, might give Occasion \* to the worshipping such erected Stones in future Ages, and (upon such Abuse) of God's so strictly prohibiting any to be set up: (b) *Ye shall not make ye any Idols or graven Image, neither shall ye rear up*

From Gen. xxviii. 10. to Ch. xxxvii.

5 F

any

(a) *Heidegger's* Hist. Patriar. Exercit.

\* From *Jacob's* pouring Oil upon the Stone of *Bethel*, did arise the Superstition of the Antients for their *Betuli*, which were Stones anointed and consecrated to the Memory of great Men after their Death. *Sanchoniatho*, or rather *Porphyry*, the Author of the Fragment, which *Eusebius* has preserv'd, under the Name of *Sanchoniatho*, attributes the Invention of these *Betuli* to *Saturn*; but the best Account, that can be given of this absurd Practice, is from hence; and a sufficient Demonstration it is, how the best and noblest Acts of Piety may be perverted, and degenerate into mere Stupidity, by a fond superstitious Imitation. *Calmet's* Dictionary, under the Word *Bethel*, and *Bibliotheca Bibl.* Vol. I. Occas. Annot. 30.

(b) Lev. xxvi. 1.



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any *Matzebah* (Statue or Pillar) to bow down unto it, for I am the Lord your God.

IN the religious Sense of the Word then, *Matzebah* may properly signify a large consecrated Stone, erected *Pillar-wise*, before which Prostrations and Adorations were made, and upon which Oblations and Libations, but not any bloody Sacrifices, were presented: But then the Question is, how *Jacob* cou'd think to secure this Monument from being thrown down by the Natives, or Passengers, or how he cou'd impose a new Name upon it, and establish that Name in future Ages, when the Place had a Name before, and no Person was present to bear Testimony of what he did. This indeed the Scripture gives us no Manner of Account of, and therefore (if we do it but *modestly*) we are left at Liberty to make our own Conjectures.

What it was.

ACCORDING to the antient *Versions* of the Word, we may suppose, that there was upon this Stone some legible and intelligible Title, or Inscription; nor is it improbable, that the Title shou'd be, what the Patriarch, in a sort of Extasy, called it, *Bethel*, or the *House of God*. How *Jacob* might be provided with an Iron-pen, or *Stile*, for the Purpose of engraving this Title, can be no difficult Thing to imagine, if we do but consider, that the *Stile* was the common Instrument of writing in those Days, which every *Scholar* us'd to carry about with him, and which *Jacob*, \* having led a studious and contemplative Life under his Father and Grandfather, and (as some suppose) under *Melchisedech* likewise, was not unqualified to make use of; and that the very antient, if not universal Custom of erecting, anointing, and consecrating such like Stones, with an Inscription, either *lite-*

*ral*, or *hieroglyphical*, and sometimes both, could hardly have any other Foundation, than this Practice of his. From Gen. xxviii. 10. to Ch. xxxvii.

BUT, besides the bare Inscription of the Name, and Title of the Stone, there might probably be yet something more, to attract the Eyes of the Traveller, and to raise a Veneration for the Place. And therefore, admitting the Stone to be *square*, we find that there were two Oaths, as it were, taken upon it, by the covenanting Parties, *i. e.* the *Oath of God to Jacob*, repeating the Substance of what he had sworn to his Fathers, and limiting it to him, and his Seed; and the *Oath of Jacob to God*, obliging himself and his Posterity, to such a constant Homage, as is therein specified; and, hereupon we may infer, that for the better Preservation of the Memory of this great *League*, there might be written, on one Side, the *Obligation of God*, exactly in the Terms of the 13th, 14th, and 15th Verses, and, on the *opposite*, the *Obligation of Jacob*, as express'd by him in the three last Verses of the 28th Chapter of *Genesis*. And, because it was necessary, that the Name of the Person who erected, and consecrated the Stone, should be preserved; we may farther suppose, that, as God's signing this Covenant on his Part might be in this Form, ANI JEHOVAH, ELOHE ABRAHAM, ELOHE ISAAC, *I the Lord, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac*; by Parity of Reason, *Jacob's* signing might run thus, ANI JACOB, BEN ISAAC, BEN ABRAHAM, *I Jacob, the Son of Isaac, the Son of Abraham*.

ON the *vacant* Sides of the Stone, we may suppose again, that the other awful Sentences, which *Jacob*, upon this Occasion, pronounced, (*c*) *How dreadful is this Place; This is the Gate of Heaven, and verily the Lord is in this Place!* were engraven:

\* That *Jacob* was a Man of Learning, and of an extraordinary Genius, is not only a general Tradition of the *Jeus*, but supported likewise by some Lines in the Character, which the Pen of *Moses* gives us of him. He had certainly great Advantages under his Father, and Grandfather, who justly deserv'd a Name among the oldest *Oriental* Philosophers; and therefore he is describ'd, in the *Eastern Stile*, as a *Man dwelling in Tents*, as much as to say, one, who leads a philosophical and contemplative Life, or a *Minister*, or Student of the *House of Learning*, as the *Targums* truly interpret the Phrase. *Bibliotheca Bibl.* Vol. I. Occas. Annot. 35.

(c) Gen. xxviii. 16, 17.



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2149, &c.  
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1855, &c.

engraven: And, because a very early Custom of crowning such publick Pillars with *Garlands* might very likely take its Rise from *Jacob's* Practice at this Time, we may therefore be allow'd to make one Conjecture more, *viz.* that, as *Luz*, near which this Transaction happen'd, had its Name from a Grove of *Almond-trees*, not far distant from it; so *Jacob* might think it very decent, in Memory of the divine Favours there receiv'd, to crown, and adorn the Top of this *titular* Stone, with a *Garland* of *Almond-branches* taken from thence. All this, we allow, is no more than Supposition and Conjecture: But, without some such Contrivance as this, how could this Stone have been an Instrument to perpetuate the Memory of any Event? How, a Means of *Jacob's* imposing a new Name upon a Place, that was entirely in the Possession of others? Well might the Natives, or Proprietors ask, by *what Authority* this was done; and, since *Jacob* was not there to give them an Answer, his only Way could be, to leave the History, and Occasion of it, engraven upon the *very* Stone.

AND indeed, without some such Supposition, why should this Stone, even by different Nations, be accounted such a valuable Piece of Antiquity? Why should the *Jews* be so fond to have it thought, that they had it in the *Sanctuary* of their *second* Temple, and that upon it the *Ark of the Covenant* was plac'd? Since the Destruction of their Temple, why should it be their Custom, one Day in a Year, with great Lamentation, *to go, and anoint this Stone*, in Remembrance of their Father *Jacob*, and the Covenant made with him? And why should the *Mahometans* pretend, that they have this Stone (tho', by Mistake of one Patriarch for another, they call it *the Stone of Abraham*) set up at their Temple at *Mecca*, which they make their common *Kibla*, or Point of Worship, and before which the Pilgrims pay their solemn Devotions?

THESE, we allow, may be no more than false Pretences; but still they are an Evidence, that this *Pillar* was once held in high Veneration, which it could hardly have been, but must very soon have been buried in Oblivion and Rubbish, had it been no more than a large ragged Stone, without any Thing to distinguish it, *i. e.* without any Scripture, or Inscription on it. And therefore, (notwithstanding the Silence of Scripture) we have sufficient Reason to conclude, that this Pillar was erected in order to preserve the Remembrance of the heavenly Vision, which God, in this Place, vouchsafed *Jacob*; that to this Purpose it was engraven with such Inscriptions, as might give Posterity sufficient Intelligence upon what Occasion it was erected; that, by Means of such Inscriptions, it came to be recogniz'd as *Jacob's* Pillar, and held in great Esteem in future Generations; that this Pillar thus engraved, (as it was the first of its Kind, that we have upon Record) gave probably the Origin to the Invention of *Stelography*, or the antient Manner of writing upon Stone, ever after; and that the Consecration of this Stone, and the Imposition of a new Name upon the Place where it stood, is enough to justify the Practice of *sanctifying* Places, appointed for religious Worship, by some solemn Form of *Separation*; of calling them the *House of God*, and imputing to them a *relative* Holiness; in Christian Countries, of *dedicating* them to the Memory of departed *Saints* and *Martyrs*; and, every where, of observing that wholesome and devout Advice of the *Preacher*:  
(d) *Keep thy Foot, when thou goest into the House of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the Sacrifice of Fools. Be not rash with thy Mouth, and let not thine Heart be hasty to utter any Thing before God, for he is in Heaven, and thou upon Earth, therefore let thy Words be few.*

From Gen.  
xxviii. 10. to  
Ch. xxxvii.

(d) Ecclef. v. 1, 2.



A. M.  
2276, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1728, &c.

From Gen.  
xxxvii. to the  
End.

## CHAP. IV.

### Of the Life of JOSEPH \*, which includes the rest of JACOB's.

#### The HISTORY.

Joseph is  
hated by his  
Brethren, and  
why.

JACOB had not been long with his Father, before there befel him another sad Disaster. *Joseph* was his beloved Child, as being the Son of his dear departed *Rachel*, and † a Youth of a very promising and extraordinary *Genius*. As a Mark of his peculiar Love, the fond Father gave him Cloathes, richer than he did the rest, and, among others, † one Coat more

especially, which was made of a *changeable*, or *party-colour'd* Stuff. This made his other Brothers envy him not a little; and, what gained him no Good-will among them, was their looking upon him as a *Spy*, because he had told his Father some Things, wherein the Sons of *Bildab* and *Zilphab* († with whom he was chiefly conversant) † had grossly misbehaved, which made

\* Two Reasons are generally assigned, why *Moses* is more prolix in relating the Adventures of *Joseph*, than of any other of *Jacob's* Children: Both because his Life is a bright Example of Piety, Chastity, Meekness, and Prudence; and because it was, by the Means of *Joseph*, that *Jacob* went down into *Egypt*: And, as his going down gave Occasion to the wonderful Departure of the Children of *Israel* from thence, so the History of the *Jews* would have been sadly imperfect, and indeed altogether unintelligible, without a longer Account, than ordinary, of *Joseph's* Life, and Transactions there. *Heidegger's Hist. Patriar. Vol. II. Exercit. 20.*

† Most Versions, as well as ours, have made *Jacob* to love *Joseph*, because he was the Son of his old Age: Whereas had this been the Cause of his Affection, he must have loved *Zebulun* as much as *Joseph*, because he was of the same Age, and *Benjamin* much more, because he was above fifteen Years younger. It seems therefore, as if they had confounded the Words *Ben-Zekenim*, the Son of Senators, or Elders (as he is called here) with *Ben Ziknah*, the Son of old Age, whereas the former has a Signification quite different. According to the *Hebrew Idiom*, it signifies the Son, or Disciple of Senators, i. e. one endued with an extraordinary Wisdom and Prudence; accordingly the *Samaritan*, *Arabick*, and *Persian* Versions have rendered it, because he was a wise and prudent Son, tho' even this comes short of the Energy of the *Idiom*, and might more properly be rendered because he was as wise and prudent, as a Senator. And this justifies the Reason of *Jacob's* extraordinary Love to *Joseph*, because 'tis natural for Parents, especially for Fathers, to admire those Children, who shew any Degree of Wisdom above their Years; whereas to be fond of a Child, begotten in one's old Age, and for no other Reason, is no more than a Piece of Dotage, which *Moses* would hardly have thought worth recording. *Universal History l. i. c. 7. and Howell's History l. i.*

† The Coat, whereby *Jacob* distinguished his Son *Joseph* from the rest of his Brothers, is generally thought to signify a Garment, that was wrought with Threads of divers Colours, or made up of Pieces of Silk or Stuff, which had much Variety in them; but the Word *Passim*, which is here made use of, according to some learned Annotators, does properly signify a long Garment, down to the Heels or Ancles, with long Sleeves down to the Wrists, which had a Border at the Bottom, and a Facing (as we call it) at the Hands, of a Colour different to the Garment, which was accounted noble, as well as beautiful, in antient Times. *Patrick's Commentary.*

† He chose the Sons of his Father's Concubines, rather than those of his Wife *Leah*, to be his Companions, on purpose perhaps to avoid the ill Consequences of the latter's Envy and Emulation against him. For, 'tis not unlikely, that *Leah's* Sons, considering the excessive Love, which their Father had for him, might be ready to suspect, that he design'd to bequeath the Right of *Primogeniture* to him, which each of them thinking they had a better Title to, might thereupon be tempted to malign, and maltreat him: Whereas among the Sons, descended from Concubines, (as having not the like Ambition) he might find better Quarter, and to their Company the rather resort, out of a Principle of Humility and Condescension, and to discountenance the haughty Behaviour of the Sons of *Leah* towards the Sons of the Concubines. *Patrick's Commentary, and Bibliotheca Bibl. in Locum.*

† The *Hebrew*, and the *Alexandrian LXX* have it, they brought unto their Father an evil Report, or grievous Complaints against *Joseph*, i. e. they began their base and barbarous Treatment of him with Lies and Calumnies. However

*Aquila,*



A. M.  
2276, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1728, &c.

made them treat him so very furly, that, whenever he spake to them, they would scarce give him a civil Answer. But, that which compleated their Envy and Resentment, or rather turned them into an irreconcilable Hatred, was, his *innocently* telling them some of his Dreams, which seem'd to portend his Advancement in the World above them.

HE told them, that, one Night, he dreamt, that, as he, and they were binding Sheaves together in the Field, his Sheaf stood upright, while theirs fell prostrate before it, as if they had been doing Obedience; and that, at another Time, he fancied himself mounted on high, and the Sun, Moon, and eleven Stars, doing him the like Homage. This raised the Indignation of the rest, as thinking it a Disparagement to have a *younger* Brother their *Superior*: Which their Father perceiving, (in Hopes of mitigating their Resentment) \* thought fit to discountenance him in the *Interpretation* of his Dreams, by telling him, that they were vain, and *chimerical*, and what could never come to pass; tho', in himself, he could not but think, that there was something extraor-

dinary and *ominous* in them. His Brothers however, instead of abating their Hatred, grew, every Day, more and more exasperated; so that they resolved, at last, to cut him off, and only waited for a convenient Opportunity.

IT happened, at this Time, that *Joseph's* ten Brethren (for *Benjamin* was, as yet, too young for any Business) were keeping their Flocks not far from *Shechem*, when their Father, not having heard from them for some Time, and † being not a little anxious for their Welfare, sent *Joseph* to find them out, and know how they did. As he drew near to *Shechem*, he was informed by a Person, whom he met with by Accident, that they had removed from thence, and were gone, about twenty Miles farther *North*, to a Place called † *Dotban*. Thither *Joseph* went after them; and no sooner did they see him approaching, but their old Malice revived, and immediately they resolved to make away with this *Master-dreamer*, (as they called him) and so persuade their Father that some wild Beast had devoured him.

THIS Resolution, barbarous as it was, had certainly been put in Execution, † had not

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xxxvii. to the  
End.

*Aquila*, *Symmachus*, and the *Syriack* make *Joseph* the Accuser; but of what Crime it was, that he accused them to his Father, and whether it consisted in *Deeds*, or *Words* only, is a Subject that has occasioned a great Variety of Conjectures among *Criticks* and *Commentators*. Some will have it, that *Joseph* told of their Unkindness and Asperity to him; others, of their quarrelling, and contentious Way of living. Some, of their committing *Sodomy* or *Bestiality*; while those, who confine it to *Words* only, suppose it to be passionate and undutiful Reflections, they might make upon their Father, for loving *Joseph* more than themselves. But, whatever it was, it may be gathered, from their propense Malice to him, that it was no small Crime, because that for his telling it (and which he might do with no other Intent, but only that his Father's Rebukes and Admonitions might reform them) they hated him even unto Death. *Bibliotheca Bibl.* and *Howell's History*.

\* *St Chrysostom*, in his Homily upon the Place, has given us this farther Reason ——— “ Besides, *says he*, he “ might think it convenient to give this calm Check to a Spirit so much elated, as this young Man must be “ by those great and certain Expectations, which God was pleased, in so extraordinary a Manner, to set before him. The Foreknowledge of all that Greatness and Glory, which was one Day infallibly to be his “ Portion, might have put him upon a wrong *Bias* of Behaviour; might have tempted him to *antedate* his Superiority; and fail, or waver, more or less, in his Duty to his elder Brethren, if not to his Father himself: “ and this seems to be the Meaning of *Jacob's* mentioning his Mother, who was dead, and did not so well comport with his Dream. But, at the same Time that in Prudence he was willing to prevent any vain aspiring “ Conceits, or Tumours in his Son, in *Faith* he was persuaded, that the Fact would prove such, as it was “ foretold.”

† The Reason of *Jacob's* Uneasiness, and of sending his Son *Joseph* upon this Errand, will be very obvious, if it be remembered that the Sons of *Jacob* had so incensed the neighbouring Places by the Massacre of the *Shechemites*, that *Jacob* was obliged immediately to quit the Country, for fear of a general Insurrection upon him, as we read Gen. xxxiv. 30.

† It was a Town about twelve Miles to the *North* of the City of *Samaria*, as *Eusebius* informs us. *Well's Geography of the Old Testament*, Vol. I.

† He either thought himself most concerned to save his Brother, as being the First-Born, and therefore like to be the first in the Blame; or he might hope, by thus piously and compassionately preserving the Favourite *Joseph*, to recover



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not *Reuben*, who was the eldest, interposed, and dissuading them from imbruing their Hands in his Blood, advised rather to throw him into the next Pit, with a Design himself to draw him out privately, and convey him safe home to his Father. *Reuben's* Advice was liked : and therefore, as soon as *Joseph* came up to them, they immediately seized him, pulled off his fine Coat, and threw him into a Pit, which, at that Time, chanced to be dry ; whereupon *Reuben* withdrew, to contrive some Means for rescuing his Brother, whilst the others (as if they had done some glorious Act) sat down to eat, and drink, and regale themselves.

Is sold into  
Egypt.

IN the mean Time || a *Caravan* of *Ishmaelites*, who were travelling from Mount *Gilead* into *Egypt* with Spices and other Merchandize, appeared in Sight, which put *Judab* in the Thought of taking their Brother out of the Pit, and selling him to these Merchants, which wou'd every whit answer their Purpose as well, or better. The Proposal was no sooner made,

than it was approved : *Joseph* was taken out of the Pit, was sold to the Merchants, and the Merchants sold him again to *Potiphar*, one of the King's chief Officers, and *Captain of his Guards*. *Reuben*, being absent while this was done, came to the Pit not long after, in order to rescue his Brother ; but, finding him not there, he began to bewail and lament himself to such a Degree, that his Brethren, to pacify his Grief, were forced to tell him, in what Manner they had disposed of him ; whereupon *Reuben*, finding it impossible now to recover him, joined with them in contriving how to manage the Matter with their Father, so as to take off from themselves all Manner of Suspicion.

To this Purpose they killed a Kid, and dipping *Joseph's* Coat in the Blood of it, || sent it to their Father, as if they had found it in the Field, and were fearful that it was their Brother's. Their Father soon perceived whose Coat it was ; and, supposing that some wild Beast or other had slain his Son, † he rent his Cloaths, and put

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recover that Place in his Father's Affection, which he had lost by his Incest with *Bilhah*, his concubinary Wife. The Speech, which *Josephus* introduces him as making upon this Occasion, is very moving, and very rhetorical. " It were an abominable Wickedness, says he, to take away the Life, even of a Stranger, but to destroy a Kinsman and a Brother, and, in that Brother, a Father and a Mother too, with Grief for the Loss of so good, and so hopeful a Son. ——— Bethink yourselves, if any Thing can be more diabolical. Consider that there is an all-seeing God, who will be the Avenger, as well as Witness of this horrid Murder. Bethink yourselves, I say, and repent of your barbarous Purpose. You must never expect to commit this flagitious Villany, and the divine Vengeance not overtake you ; for God's Providence is every where, in the Wilderness, as well as in the City, and the Horrors of a guilty Conscience will pursue you wherever you go. ——— But, put the Case your Brother had done you some Wrong ; yet is it not our Duty to pass over the Slips of our Friends ? When the Simplicity of his Youth may justly plead his Excuse, his Brothers certainly, of all Men living, should be his Friends and Guardians, rather than his Murderers ; especially when the Ground of all your Quarrel is this ——— That God loves your Brother, and your Brother loves God. *Josephus*, l. 2. c. 3.

|| Tho' we name the *Ishmaelites* only, yet here seem to be two, if not three Sorts of Merchants mentioned in this Passage, the *Ishmaelites*, the *Midianites*, and the *Medanites* (as they are called in the Hebrew, Gen. xxxvii. 36.) who were a distinct People from the *Midianites*, as descended from *Medan*, one of *Abraham's* Sons by *Keturah*, and Brother to *Midian*, Gen. xxv. 2. But as they, and the *Midianites* lived near together in *Arabia*, not far from the *Ishmaelites*, they all joined together in this *Caravan*, and one Society of Merchants, as it is the Custom, even to this Day, in those Eastern Countries, for Merchants and others to travel through the *Deserts* in large Companies, for fear of wild Beasts or Robbers. *Patrick's* Commentary, and *Pool's* Annotations.

|| In one and the same Verse it is said, that they sent the Coat of many Colours, and they brought it to their Father : But this seeming Solecism is easily resolved, only by saying, that they sent it by the Hands of Persons, who brought it to their Father ; or that they sent it by a Messenger, as being afraid to be present at the first Gust of their Father's Passion, and afterwards brought, or produced it, when one of them (as *Judab* is supposed to have been their Spokesman) related the Tale which follows : By which Artifice they seem'd to give themselves an Air of Compassion, since it was no uncommon Thing afterwards, (as in the Case of *Julius Caesar*, and *Julia* his Daughter, the Wife of *Pompey*) on mournful Occasions, to produce such affecting Relicks and Remains. *Bibliotheca Bibl.*

† Renting the Cloaths was an Eastern Way of expressing either Grief for Calamity, or Horror for Sin. *Reuben* was the first, we read of, who, to denote his exceeding Sorrow, rent his Cloaths ; and, as *Jacob*, we find, does the like, we may well suppose that it was an usual Manner of expressing all Grief and Uneasiness of Mind, in those Days ; and,



A. M.  
2276, *Esc.*  
Ant. Christ.  
1728, *Esc.*

put on Sackcloth, and began to mourn for his Death. In vain did the rest of his Children endeavour to comfort him; his Grief would admit of no Remedy; his Resolution was to lament his Loss to the Hour of his Death; nor did he ever cease this disconsolate Way of Life, until he was told the surprizing News of *Joseph's* Advancement in *Egypt*.

FROM the Time that *Joseph* had Admission into *Potiphar's* Family, he shewed such Diligence and Fidelity, and prov'd so successful in every Thing he undertook, that his Master soon took Notice of him, and, in some Time, having made him his *Steward*, † put all his Affairs under his Management.

*Is tempted and accus'd by Potiphar's Wife.*

IN this Condition, *Joseph* might have liv'd very happy, had it not been for an Adventure of a Nature somewhat singular. He was now in the † Bloom of his

Youth, and of a Beauty and Comeliness so extraordinary, that his Master's Wife could not forbear conceiving an *irregular* Passion for him. Upon several Occasions, she had given him Indications enough of her ardent Desire to draw him into a wanton Familiarity with her, but he was *blind* to her Signs, and deaf to her soft Speeches; so that she was at last resolv'd to break through the Rules of her Sex, and court him in plain Terms. But how great was her Surprise, when, instead of a ready Compliance, as she probably expected, she found herself not only denied, but severely reprimanded likewise for her disloyal Passion! Being willing however to hope that another Opportunity would prove more favourable, after several fruitless Attempts, she, at last, laid hold on *one*, when all the Family was abroad, and \* accosted him in so violent and passionate

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by putting on Sackcloth, (which *Jacob* is here the first Precedent of doing, but was afterwards commonly used upon all mournful Occasions) he seem'd to signify, that, since he had lost his beloved Son, he look'd upon himself as reduced to the meanest, and lowest Condition of Life. *Bibliotheca Bibl.* and *Howell's History*.

† *Jacob* expresses his Sorrow in these Words, — *I will go down unto the Grave unto my Son*. But if, by the Grave, we are here to understand a Place of Sepulture, how could *Jacob* say, that he would go down thither to his Son, when he presumes here, that he was not buried, but torn to Pieces by wild Beasts. To solve this Difficulty, some imagine, that the Particle *El* should not, in this Place, be render'd *to*, but (as it sometimes means) *for*, or *in the stead of*; and so the Sense is, *I will go down to the Grave, INSTEAD OF my Son*, who (unhappy Child as he was) had no Burial: But, since the Word *Scholab*, in *Greek* *Σχολα*, in *Latin* *Infernum*, signifies very frequently the State of the Dead in general, the much clearer Sense of the Words will be, — *I will not cease mourning until I die, and be laid in my Grave*. *Le Clerc's Commentary*.

† The Words in the Text are, *he knew not aught he had, save the Bread, which he did eat*; which is one of the highest Expressions of Confidence, that we can imagine: For it signifies, that he was utterly careless about any Thing that concern'd his Estate, not minding what his Expence or Receipts were; but, taking his Ease, left all to *Joseph's* Honesty. In short, he thought of nothing, but only to enjoy what he had, without Care or Trouble. *Patrick's Commentary*.

† *Joseph*, at this Time, was about seven and twenty Years old. For he was seventeen, when he was sold to *Potiphar*, Gen. xxxvii. 2. and he was committed to Prison immediately, upon his Non-compliance with his Mistress's Temptation; where, (as far as it appears) he had not been long, before he interpreted the Dreams of the two disgrac'd Courtiers; and, two Years after that, he was releas'd and promoted, *viz.* when he was thirty Years old: So that we may reasonably conclude, that this Temptation beset him about three Years before his Release, *i. e.* in the twenty-seventh Year of his Age. At this Time, it is supposable, that he was a comely Person enough, and the Saying is, that *bonesta Forma muta Commendatio est*; but the Stories, relating to his excessive Beauty, as they are recorded by the *Talmudists*, are ridiculous, and not much better, than what *Mahomet*, in his History of the Patriarch tells us, *viz.* That his Mistress, having invited the Ladies of the Town to a splendid Entertainment, order'd *Joseph* to be call'd for, but that, as soon as he appear'd, they were amaz'd at his Beauty, and so confounded, that they knew not what they did, but instead of eating their Meat, they eat their Fingers, and said among themselves, *this is not a Man, but an Angel*. *Bibliotheca Bibl.* in *Locum*, and *Alchoran*, Chap. of *Joseph*.

\* *Josephus* tells us, that *Potiphar's* Wife took the Opportunity of a certain Festival, when all the People were gone a Merry-making, to tempt *Joseph*; that, feigning herself sick, she decoy'd him, by that Means, into her Apartment, and then address'd herself to him in Words to this Effect. “It had been much better for you, *sejs she*, had you complied with my first Request; if, for no other Consideration, in Regard, at least, to the Dignity of the Person who is become your Petitioner, and to the Excess of my Passion. Besides, it would have sav'd me the Shame of condescending to some Words and Expressions, which I am still out of Countenance, when I think of. — You might perhaps make some Doubt before, whether I was in earnest; but this is to satisfy you, that I mean no Ill by my persisting in the same Mind. Take therefore your Choice now, whether you will improve this Opportunity



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2276, &c.  
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fionate a Manner, that she would not hear any farther Denial. In vain it was for him \* to expostulate the Heinousness of the Crime: Her Appetite was eager, and impatient; and therefore she caught him by the Cloak, and press'd him to lie with her; and he, having no other Way to escape, left his Cloak in her Hand, and fled.

Whether it was that she fear'd, by his Manner and Behaviour, that he might accuse her to her Husband, or that she was enraged at the Slight put upon her proffer'd Love; but so it was, that she resolv'd his immediate Ruin: And, accordingly, she began with \* setting up a most horrid *Outcry*, which immediately

brought in all, that were within hearing, and then shewing them *Joseph's* Cloak, (which she pretended he put off in order to lie with her) she told them, that he had made so furious an Attempt upon her Virtue, that nothing but her loud Cries could have sav'd her.

By the Time that her Husband came home, \* she had dress'd up her Story so well, and express'd the pretended Indignity put upon her with such an Air of Resentment, that her *credulous* Husband, little suspecting his Wife's *Treachery*, was so prepossess'd with the Circumstance of the Cloak, that, without any farther Enquiry, † he hurried poor *Joseph* away, and clapp'd him up in the King's Prison: Where

we

“ opportunity of a present Satisfaction, in the Embraces of a Creature, that loves you dearly, and from whom you may expect still greater Things; or stand the Shock of my Hatred and Revenge, if you will presume to value yourself upon the vain Conceit of your Chastity, more than my Favour, &c.” Antiq. l. 2. c. 4.

\* *Josephus*, however brings in his *Name-sake* expostulating the Matter with his Mistress, and reminding her of her Duty to herself, and her Husband, to Piety, and common Fame. “ What signifies, *says he*, a momentary Pleasure, with a certain Repentance immediately to ensue; an Heaviness of Heart for a Thing once done, and an utter Impossibility of recalling and undoing it, together with perpetual Fears of Discovery and Disgrace? What does all this signify, *I say*, in Ballance of the most substantial Comforts, and the most necessary Duties of human Life? Whereas in a *conjugal* State, the self-same Delights are all free, safe, innocent, and warrantable both before God and Man. Consider again how it would lessen your Authority, to make your Servant your Equal by a shameful Participation in one common Crime; and, pray, is it not better to trust to a good Conscience, that fears no Light, than to commit Wickedness in the Dark, and then live all your Days in a restless Dread of being detected? &c.” Antiq. *ibid.*

\* There is something not unlike this revengeful Artifice in *Potiphar's* Wife, in the Representation, which the Poet makes of *Phædra*, when, in an Affair of the like Nature, she finds herself rejected by her Son-in-Law *Hippolytus*.

Regeremus ipsæ crimen, atque ultro impiam  
Venerem arguamus, &c.  
Adeste, *Athenæ*, fida famulorum manus,  
Per opem, &c.

————— En præceps abiit,  
Ensemque trepidâ liquit attonitus fugâ,  
Pignus tenemus sceleris, &c.

Senec. Hip.

\* Upon *Potiphar's* coming home, *Josephus* makes his Wife break out into these Words: “ You'll never deserve to live, *Husband*, unless you make an Example of that perfidious Wretch, your Man. He has forgotten what he was, when you took him into your House, how kindly and respectfully he has been treated here, to a Degree beyond his very Hope, as well as his Desert. The Charge of your whole Family is committed to him, the Command of the rest of your Servants, and the Trust of all you have. What will you think of this Fellow now, who, in Requital of all your Bounty, and good Offices, could have the Impudence to attempt the Violation of your Bed, and to take the Opportunity of this *Festival* Day, when you were out of the Way, to break in upon my Privacy, and press the Enjoyment of his beastly Ends. You have made him, in effect, Master of all Things under your Roof; and would nothing serve him, but he must have your Wife likewise? Here's the ungrateful Villain's Cloak, which, in his Fright, he left behind him, when I cried out, as he was going to *force* me.” Antiq. l. 2. c. 4.

† 'Tis somewhat wonderful, that, if *Potiphar* believ'd his Wife's Story, he did not immediately put him to Death; but there is one Thing, which might check the Violence of his Passion, and that was, the great Opinion, he had, for some Time, been confirm'd in, of *Joseph's* Virtue and Integrity. *Joseph*, he saw, was young and beautiful, and therefore he might think it a Thing not impossible for a Lady of Distinction to be in Love with him, and upon a Disappointment to be exasperated: As therefore he would not inflict any *capital*, or corporal Punishment on him, so he thought it prudent to hurry him away to Prison unheard, lest, being allow'd to speak in his own Vindication, he might clear himself, and thereby bring Discredit upon his Family. It must not be denied however (what *St Chry-*

*ostom*



A. M. we shall leave him for a while, to  
2276, &c. take a View of what pass'd in his Father's  
Ant. Christ. 1728, &c. Family.

Thamar's  
Stratagem a-  
gainst her Fa-  
ther-in-law,  
Judah.

† BEFORE the Time, that *Joseph* was sold into *Egypt*, *Judah*, his Father's Son by *Leah*, had married † a *Canaanitish* Woman, named *Shuah*, by whom he had three Sons, *Er*, *Onan*, and *Shelah*. *Er* being cut off for his Wickedness, before he had any Children by his Wife *Thamar*, *Judah* order'd his second Son *Onan*, (according to the Custom of the Country) to marry her, and † to raise a Posterity to his Brother. *Onan* seemingly obey'd his Father, but not brooking the Thoughts, that any of his Children should inherit his Brother's Name who was dead, he took such a wicked and *unnatural* Way to prevent having any, that God was provok'd to punish him with sudden Death likewise. His third Son *Shelah* was not yet fit for Marriage; and therefore *Judah* desir'd his Daughter-in-law to retire to her Father's House, and there live a *Widow*, until he became *adult*, and then he would make him her Husband. *Thamar* did so, and waited till *Shelah* was come to Man's Estate; but finding no Performance of

*Judah's* Promise, (as indeed he never heartily intended any) she was resolv'd to make herself amends some other Way, which she did by the following *Stratagem*.

From Gen. xxxvii. to the End.

*JUDAH* had lately buried his Wife; and, as soon as the usual Days of Mourning were over, he took a particular Friend with him, and went to *Tinnah*, to divert himself a little at the *Shearing-Feast*. *Thamar* had Intelligence of this; and therefore, putting off her Widow's Weed, and dressing herself like a *Courtesan*, she threw a Veil over her Face, and planted herself between two Ways, where she knew her Father-in-law, in his Way to *Tinnah*, was obliged to pass.

*JUDAH* no sooner saw her, but, taking her to be what she appear'd, he began to make his Addresses to her. What she insisted on was only a Reward for her Compliance, which he readily agreed to, and promised to send her a *Kid*: but she, having a farther Design upon him, demanded a Pledge for the Performance of his Promise, which was his *Signet*, his *Bracelet*, and his Staff; and so being agreed, they went together, had their Enjoyment, and she proved with Child.

*JUDAH,*

*Joseph* has observ'd) that here again was a special, and, as it were, a miraculous Intervention of the divine Power, which preserv'd his Life, as it did before, when he was cast into the Pit. The *superior* Influence, which *soften'd* the Heart of *Reuben*, restrain'd the Hand of *Potiphar*, in order to make our *Patriarch* a more glorious Example, and to compleat these Events, in the Course of his Life, which God had determin'd and foretold. *Chrys. Hom. in Locum.*

† Tho' the latter Part of *Jacob's* Story, relating to the *Incest* with his Daughter *Thamar*, was acted after *Joseph* was sold, and while he was in *Egypt*; yet the former Part of it, relating to his *Marriage*, and the Birth of his three Sons, must needs fall out before *Joseph* was sold. For, since there were but two and twenty, or, at the most, but three and twenty Years between *Joseph's* being sold into *Egypt*, and *Jacob's* going down thither, it cou'd no ways be, that, in so short a Space of Time, *Judah* cou'd marry a Wife; have three Sons at three several Times by her; marry two of her Sons successively to one Woman; defer the Marriage of the third Son; to the same Woman, beyond the due Time; afterwards, himself have Sons by the same Woman his Daughter-in-law; and one of these Sons, *Pharez*, beget two Sons, *Hezron*, and *Hamul*, Gen. xvi. 12. It can no ways be, I say, that all these Transactions should be compris'd in so short a Time. And therefore we must suppose, that the Business of his being married, and having Children, was prior to *Joseph's* being sold; but that *Moses*, not willing to intermingle the Story of the two Brothers too much, brings all he had to say concerning *Judah* into the Compass of one *Chapter*, and so concludes his Adventures, before he proceeds to those of *Joseph*. *Howell's History*, l. 1. *Universal History*, l. 1. c. 7. and *Bibliotheca Bibl. in Locum.*

† It was not so bad for a Man *circumcis'd* to marry the Daughter of one *uncircumcis'd*, as it was for an *Israelite* to give a Daughter in Marriage to an *uncircumcis'd* Husband, Gen. xxxiv. 14. For an *uncircumcis'd* Man was accounted *unclean*, tho' he had renounc'd Idolatry; but a Woman, born of *uncircumcis'd* Parents, if she embrac'd the Worship of the true God, was not so accounted. And such an one, we may suppose *Judah's* Wife to have been; otherwise, he had offended his Father, as much as *Esau* did *Isaac* by marrying the Daughter of *Heth*. *Patrick's Commentary.*

† This is the first Mention we have of this Custom, which nevertheless seems to have been a very common one, and well understood even by young *Onan*; for he knew, that the first-born Child was not to be accounted *his*, but his decess'd Brother's, was to be call'd by his Name, and inherit his Estate. For this, say the *Hebrew Doctors*, was an antient Custom, in Force before the Law of *Moses*, that, when a Man died without Issue, his Brother should marry his Wife, and that the first Son, upon such Marriage, was to be reputed her decess'd Husband's Heir. *Patrick's*, and *Le Clerc's Commentary.*



A. M.  
2276, &c.  
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**JUDAH**, according to his Promise, sent by his Friend *Hirah* (for that was his Name) a Kid to redeem his Pledge; but when *Hirah* came to the Place, the Woman was gone, nor could he find, upon his best Enquiry; that any such Person, as he described, had ever been there: So that *Judah*, when he told him his ill Success, thought it the wisest Way to let her go off with the Pledges, rather than run the Hazard of his Reputation, by making any farther Search.

ABOUT three Months after this, Word was brought him, that his Daughter-in-law had played the Harlot, and was certainly with Child. *Judah*, tho' glad perhaps at the News, because her Death would free him from the Promise of giving his Son *Shelah* to her, pretended however to be highly enrag'd at her Incontinency, and, ordering her to be brought forth, † condemn'd her to be burnt, according to the Laws of the Country. *Thamar*, instead of being surpriz'd at this dreadful Sentence pronounced against her, only sent the Pledges to *Judah*, with this Message, That the Owner of these Things was the Person, by whom she was with Child: Whereupon, struck with Confusion, and reflecting on the Injury, he had done her, in withholding his Son, he acknowledg'd her † less culpable in the whole Affair than himself, and, from that Moment,

took her home to his House, but had never any more Communion with her:

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End.

WHEN the Time of her Delivery was come, she was brought-to-bed of *Twins*, but the Manner of their Birth was somewhat surprizing: For, tho' one of them put forth his Hand, about which the Midwife tied a scarlet Thread, to distinguish him for the First-born; yet, as he withdrew it, his Brother got before him, and so came first into the World; which occasioned his Name to be *Phares*, i. e. one *breaking forth*, as the other with the Thread on his Hand, was called *Zarah*.

To return to *Joseph*. He had not been long in Prison, before his virtuous and obliging Deportment gained him the Favour of the Keeper, insomuch that he was intrusted with the Management of the Affairs belonging to the Prison, and with the Custody of the Prisoners themselves.

AT this Time there were two Persons of Note, the King's Cup-bearer, and his chief Baker, for some Offence or other committed to the same Prison, where *Joseph* was; and, by the *Head-keeper*, entrusted to his Care and Attendance. To this purpose *Joseph* coming to their Apartment one Morning, and finding them both pensive and melancholy upon the Account of a *Dream*, which each of them

*Joseph interprets the Dreams of the King's Cup-bearer.*

† Among *Eastern Nations*, as well as elsewhere, Women, who were guilty of Adultery, were more severely punish'd, than the Men: Whether it was, that the Injury done the Husband was reputed to be more heinous, or that the Men, having the Power of making Laws, took care to enact them in Favour of themselves. Thus God is said, *for the Hardness of their Hearts*, to have indulg'd the *Jews* in the Matter of *divorcing* their Wives; but the Wives had not the like Privilege over their Husbands. In many Places a Man might have as many Wives as he could maintain; but the Women were to be content with one Husband: And, in like Manner, here *Judah*, we find, condemns *Thamar*, tho' a Widow for her Crime, to be burnt; whilst himself, in the same State of Widowhood, thought Fornication a very pardonable Crime. It is question'd however, by what Right and Authority he could pass this Sentence upon her: And, to answer this, it is suppos'd, that every Master was Judge and chief Magistrate in his own Family; and that therefore *Thamar*, tho' she was a *Canaanite*, yet being married into *Judah's* Family, and having brought Disgrace upon it, was properly under his Cognizance. His Cognizance however (according to the Opinion of some) did not extend so far, as to have her burnt *at the Stake*, (as we call it) but only *branded* in the *Forehead* for a Whore; tho' others deny, that his Authority extended even so far: For, being in a strange Place, it can hardly be thought, that the Power of Life and Death, or indeed of any other Penalty, was lodg'd in him: And therefore they think, that the Words mean no more than this, ——— That she should be brought before a Court of *Judicature*, and sentenc'd according to the Laws of the Country. *Selden de Jure Nat. l. 7. c. 5. Le Clerc's and Patrick's Commentary, and Howell's Universal History.*

† The Words in the Text are, *She hath been more righteous, than I*: Not more *virtuous* or *chaste*, for she knowingly committed Adultery and Incest, when he designedly did neither; but more *just*, in that he, by withholding *Shelah* from her, had provok'd her to lay this Trap for him. So that, tho' *Thamar* was wicked in the Sight of God, yet she may be said to be juster before *Judah*, or to have done no more, in drawing him into this *Scrape*, than what he justly deserv'd. *Pool's Annotations.*



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them had had the Night before, and under more Concern ſtill; becauſe, in that Place, they could have no Perſon to interpret for them; to allay their *ſuperſtitious* Humour in truſting to *Diviners* and *Soothſayers*; he told them, in the firſt Place, that the *Interpretation* of Dreams did not depend upon Rules of Art, but, if there were any Certainty in it, muſt proceed from a *divine Inſpiration*, and then deſir'd to know what it was, that they dreamt.

THE *Cup-bearer* began, and told him, — That, in his Sleep he fancied he ſaw a Vine, with three Branches, which, all on a ſudden, *budded*, then *bloſſom'd*, and ſo bore ripe Grapes; and that he had in his Hand the King's Cup, into which having ſqueez'd the Juice of the Grapes, he gave it to the King, and the King drank it from his Hand as uſual. To this *Joſeph* replied, that, as the three

Branches denoted three Days; it would not exceed the Compaſs of that Time, before the King, ‡ having made an Enquiry into the Conduct of his Servants, would reſtore him to his Favour, and his *Poſt* again. Only he deſir'd, that, if his Interpretation prov'd true, he would, in his Proſperity, † be pleaſed to remember him, and to recommend his Caſe to the King; ſince the Truth was, that he had been fraudulently taken † from his own Country, and caſt into Priſon without any Fault or Offence of his.

† HEARING ſo happy an Interpretation of this Dream, the *Baker* was the readier to propoſe his, which was to this Effect. — That, while, *as he thought*, he had on his Head three *Wicker-Baskets*, in the uppermoſt of which were ſeveral Kinds of baked Meats for the King's Table, the Birds came, and eat them out of the Basket. To which *Joſeph* immediately replied,

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Of his chief  
Baker.

‡ The Expreſſion, which *Joſeph* here makes uſe of concerning the King's Cup-bearer and Butler, *Pharaoh ſhall lift up thy Head*, ſeems ſomewhat too literally tranſlated, ſince the Words in the Original mean no more, than that *Pharaoh* would have them brought forth and examin'd. The Antients, we are to know, in keeping their Reckonings or Accounts of Time, or their Liſt of domeſtick Officers or Servants, made uſe of Tables with Holes bored in them, in which they put a Sort of Pegs, or Nails with broad Heads, exhibiting the Particulars, either Number, or Name, or whatever it was. Theſe Nails or Pegs the *Jews* call *Heads*, and the Sockets of the Heads they call *Baſes*. The Meaning therefore of *Pharaoh's lifting up his Head* is, that *Pharaoh* would take out the Peg, which had the Cup-bearer's Name on the Top of it, to read it; i. e. would ſit in Judgment, and make Examination into his Accounts. For it ſeems very probable, that both he, and the Baker had been either ſuſpected or accused of having cheated the King, and that, when their Accounts were examin'd and caſt up, the one was acquitted, while the other was found guilty. And tho' *Joſeph* uſes the ſame Expreſſion in both Caſes, yet we may obſerve, that, ſpeaking to the Baker, he adds, that *Pharaoh ſhall lift up thy Head from off thee*, i. e. ſhall order thy Name to be ſtruck out of the Liſt of his Servants, by taking thy Peg out of the Socket. *Bibliotheca Bibl. in Locum.*

† There is nothing of a Diſtruſt of God's Goodneſs, Juſtice, or Power, in making uſe of human Means. The Release of the King's Cup-bearer appear'd to *Joſeph* to be a good Opportunity, pointed out by Providence, for him to lay hold on, and wanting he would have been to his own Preſervation, had he not employed it. Though therefore it may be thought, that his aſking this Court-Officer to repreſent his Caſe to the King, might be in Reward or Compensatiſon for his Prediction; yet even herein he may be juſtified by *apoſtolic* Authority, which, in Caſes of this Nature, inſtruſts, (1 Cor. ix. 4. and Gal. vi. 6.) that temporal Advantages may very lawfully be both aſk'd, and receiv'd. In the Cup-bearer's *not remembering* him however, we may obſerve ſomething, that ſeems providentially to have turn'd to his Advantage, ſince, had he been diſcharg'd before *Pharaoh's* Dream, he might many Ways have miſs'd of that prodigious Favour and Advancement, which, by this Means, he attain'd. *Bibliotheca Bibl. in Locum.*

† The Words in the Text are, *from the Land of the Hebrews*, which ſome Men ſuppoſe were added by *Joſhua*, or ſome other Writer, after the Death of *Moſes*; becauſe, in *Moſes's* Days, and much more in *Joſhua's*, *Canaan* was not known by that Name. It is not the whole Land of *Canaan* however, that *Joſeph* here means, but only that Part of it, which lay about *Hebron*, where *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, had, for a long while liv'd, Gen. xxii. 1, 2. xxxv. 27. xxxvii. 14. 'Tis ſaid indeed, that they were *Strangers* and *Sojourners* in the Country, but then they were *Strangers* of great Note and high Renown, who were treated as Princes, liv'd by their own Laws, and made Leagues not only with private Men, but with Cities, and with Kings, Gen. xxiii. 6. xxi. 22. xxvi. 28. xxxiv. 6. The Fame of whoſe Deeds could not but be ſpread abroad, both by the Victory, which *Abraham* got in a Battle over ſeveral Kings, and by the ſacking of *Shechem*, which their Neighbours durſt not revenge; all which might very well make that Part of the Country, wherein they, for three Generations, had reſided, not improperly be call'd the *Land of the Hebrews*. *Patrick's Commentary.*

† As ſuſh as the chief Baker was with Hopes, there is this obvious *Diſference* between his, and the Cup bearer's *Proſperity*, viz. that he was not an Agent, but a Sufferer in his Dream; for he did not give a Cake, or a Confection to the King, as the other did the Cup, but the Fowls of the Air deſcended upon his Basket, and fled off with the Dainties that were in it. *Patrick's Commentary.*



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plied, that the three *Baskets* (even as the three *Branches* had done) signify'd three Days; but that, in the Space of that Time, the King, having made Scrutiny into his Behaviour, and found him guilty, would order him to be hanged upon a Gibbet, for the Fowls of the Air to devour his Flesh. And as *Joseph* foretold, so it came to pass: For, three Days after this, the *Cup-bearer* was restor'd, and the *Baker* hanged. The *Cup-bearer* however, when himself had got into Prosperity again, thought little of *Joseph*, till, in about two Years after this, an Accident happen'd, which forc'd him, in a Manner, to call him to Remembrance.

And those of  
the King him-  
self.

THE King, his Master, had, in one Night, two very portentous Dreams, which gave him the more Uneasiness, because none of the \* *Egyptian Magi* could give him the least Light into their Meaning. Seeing the King therefore in this Perplexity, the *Cup-bearer* could not forbear telling him, — That, while he, and the chief *Baker* were under his Majesty's Displeasure in Prison, each of them, in the same Night, had a Dream, which a young Man, an *Hebrew*, then in Prison with them, interpreted exactly, and as the Event happened; and that, in his Opinion, he had a Talent that Way much superior to any, that had hitherto been consulted.

PLEASED with this Discovery, and eager to have his Dream explain'd, the King gave Orders immediately for *Joseph* to be sent for; who, after he had shaved, and dressed himself, was introduced into his Presence; where he had not been long, before the King related his Dreams to him. "viz. That, as he was walking on the Banks of the River *Nile*, as he thought, he saw seven *fat* Kine, which fed in the Meadows. And soon after that, seven others, exceeding *lean*, and frightful to behold, which came, and eat up the *fat* ones, and yet looked not a Bit the better; and that, after this, he dreamt again, and fancied that he saw seven full Ears of Corn, proceeding all from the same Stalk, which were, in like Manner, devour'd by seven others, that were blasted and wither'd."

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As soon as the King had ended, *Joseph*, giving him first to understand, that it was † by the Assistance of God alone, that he was enabled to be an Interpreter of Dreams, told him, that the *seven Kine*, and *seven Ears* of Corn, signified the same Thing, and the Repetition of the Dream only denoted the Certainty of the Event; that, therefore, as the *lean* Kine seem'd to eat up the *fat*, and the *wither'd* Ears to consume the full and flourishing; so, after seven Years of great Plenty, other seven Years of extreme Famine should succeed,

\* The *Chaldeans* of old were the most famous People in the World for Divination of all Kinds; and therefore 'tis very probable, that the Word *Hbartoumim*, which we render *Magicians*, is not of *Hebrew*, but *Chaldee* Origin. The Roots however, from whence it springs (if it be a compound Word, as probably it is) are not so visible; and therefore Commentators are perplex'd to know by what Method, Men of this Profession proceeded in their Enquiry into secret Things, whether they pretended to expound Dreams, and descry future Events, by natural Observations, by the Art of Astrology, (which came much in Request in future Ages) by such Rules, as are now found in the Books of *Oneirocriticks*, or by certain Characters, Images, Pictures, and Figures, which were engrav'd with magical Rites and Ceremonies. It is not to be doubted indeed, but that the *Magicians*, whom *Pharaoh* consulted for the Interpretation of his Dreams, made use of some at least, if not all these Arts; and the *Jewish* Doctors would make us believe, that, after several Attempts of divers Kinds, they came at last to this Exposition, that *Pharaoh's* Daughters (for they suppose him to have seven) should die, and that he should have seven others born to him in their Stead; but this being not at all satisfactory to their Master, put the *Cup-bearer* in Mind of *Joseph's* great Abilities that Way. *Le Clerc's*, and *Patrick's* Commentary.

† The Words, wherein *Joseph* prefaces his Interpretation of *Pharaoh's* Dreams, are much of the same Kind with what we find *Daniel* addressing *Nebuchadnezzar* upon the like Occasion: *The Secret, which the King hath demanded, cannot the wise Men, the Astrologers, the Magicians, the Soothsayers shew unto the King; but there is a God in Heaven, who revealeth Secrets, and maketh known unto the King, what shall be in the latter Days*, Dan. ii. 27, 28. Both these holy Men intimate, that the Interests of Princes are more especially the Care of divine Providence, and that therefore, for their Admonition, he frequently sends Dreams and Visions upon them. And this Declaration, previous to the Exposition, was perfectly proper, and of mighty Force to bespeak the King's Attention and Regard, at the same Time that *Joseph* was asserting the Being and Interposition of Almighty God, in the Guidance of human Affairs. *Le Clerc's* Commentary, and *Bibliotheca Bibl. in Locum*.



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succeed, which would lay waste all the Country, and leave no Signs of the former Plenty : And therefore, since it had pleased God thus to inform the King what Seasons he intended to bring upon the Earth, he hop'd he would make a right Use of the Information, by appointing a wife and prudent Man over his whole Kingdom, who shou'd take care to build Granaries, and appoint Officers under him in every Province, who shou'd collect, and lay up † a *fifth* Part of each *plentiful* Year's Product, against the succeeding Years of *Famine*.

Whereupon he  
is made Vice-  
Roy, or Prime-  
Minister.

† THIS Interpretation, and the good Advice given upon it, made the King conceive so great an Opinion of *Joseph's* Wisdom, that he thought no one cou'd be so fit to manage the Office of collecting

the Corn, in the Years of Plenty, as he, who had suggested a Scheme so very beneficial. He therefore, in a short Time, made him his *Deputy* over the Land of *Egypt*, and to that Purpose, invested him with the usual *Ensigns* of that high Station. Gave him his own Signet from off his Finger ; caus'd him to be cloath'd in a Robe of fine Linnen, and put a golden Chain about his Neck ; order'd him to ride in a Chariot next to his own ; and wherever he went, Heralds to go before, and, in Token that the *Viceroy* was coming, to proclaim to the People, † *bare the Knee*. Nor was this all : For, to attach him still closer to his Service, and make him forget the very Thoughts of ever returning to his own Country, † he chang'd his Name to that of *Zaphnab-paaneah*, which signifies

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† Since there were to be as many Years of Scarceness, as of Plenty, some have made it a Question, why *Joseph* advis'd no more than a *fifth* Part of the Corn, in plentiful Years, to be laid up : But to this it may be replied, that the greater and richer Sort were us'd, in Time of Plenty, to fill their Store-houses with Provision, against a scarcer Year, which sometimes happen'd ; that, in the Times of Famine, Men were wont to live more frugally and parcimoniously, as the *Egyptians*, at this Time, according to *Josephus*, were oblig'd to do by *Pharaoh's* special Command ; that, even in the Year of Famine, Tillage went on, and the Harvest might be something, (tho' not mention'd, by reason that the Product was comparatively inconsiderable) especially in the Lands lying near the *Nile* ; and that as the tenth Part was an ordinary Tribute due to the Kings of *Egypt*, in the Years of extraordinary Plenty (when the *fifth* was no more than the *tenth* in other Years) *Pharaoh* might think it proper to double this Charge, or (what is rather to be suppos'd from a good King and a good Counsellor) to buy as much more, as was his Tribute, which he might do at an easy Rate, when such a vast Plenty made Corn extremely cheap. *Patrick's Commentary*.

† Here we may observe again, that *Joseph* directs *Pharaoh* to look up to God, as the Author of all these Events, and that not in an ordinary, but extraordinary Manner, since such Fertility, and such Famine, did not proceed from mere natural Causes, but from an over-ruling Providence, which made the River *Nile* overflow its Banks so largely for seven Years together, and so occasion a great Plenty ; and then, for the next seven Years, overflow very little, if at all, and so produce a very sore and long Famine. Nor can it be objected to *Joseph*, that he was guilty of Presumption or Boldness, in giving his Advice to *Pharaoh*, concerning the Provision that was to be made against the ensuing Scarceness, since he was conscious to himself, that he was best able to give such Advice, and would have been guilty of the Sin of Omission, had he neglected to do it, in so great and so general a Concern. *Patrick's Commentary*, and *Bibliotheca Bibl. in Locum*.

† *Annotators* are much at a loss to determine of what Original the Word *Abrech* is, some pretending that it is altogether *Hebrew*, while others make it a Compound of *Hebrew* and *Syriack*, and others contend, at the same Time, that it is purely *Egyptian*. Those, who pretend that it is *Hebrew*, besides the Signification of *bowing the Knee*, (which it very well bears) by dividing it into two Words, make it import a *tender Father*, and suppose, that *Joseph* might very properly be call'd a *Father*, in Point of his consummate Wisdom, and young or *tender*, in Regard to his Years. Those, who make it a Mixture of *Hebrew* and *Syriack*, divide it, in like Manner, into two Words, and suppose, that, as *Ab*, in the *Hebrew*, is *Father*, so *rech* or *rach*, in the *Syrian* Tongue, is *King*, in the same Sense, that *Joseph* says of himself, and (perhaps with Allusion to this very Name) *God has made me a Father unto Pharaoh*, Gen. xlv. 8. i. e. in giving him wholesome Counsel, even as a Father does his Children : But those, who contend for its being purely *Egyptian*, do freely confess, that, at this Distance of Time, and under such *Obsolescences* of that Language, 'tis next to impossible to find out the genuine Signification of an *honorary* Term, (as this very probably was) and therefore they observe, that, as the *Jewish* Historian makes no Mention of this Circumstance in *Joseph's* Story, he might be induc'd to that Omission, by reason of his not understanding this Word of *exotick* Growth. In this Uncertainty of Opinions therefore, we have thought it the best Way to follow that Translation, which some of the best *Hebrew* Interpreters, the *Septuagint*, and *Vulgate* Versions, have approv'd. *Heidegger's Hist. Patriar. Vol. II. Exercit. 20.*

† It was an ancient Custom among *Eastern* Princes, upon their Promotion of any Favourite, to give him a new Name. *Nebuchadnezzar*, we read, Dan. i. 7. impos'd new Names upon *Daniel*, and his Companions in *Babylon* ; and, to this very Day, the *Mogul* never advances a Man, but he gives him a new Name, and that significative of something



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fies a *Prime-minister*, and match'd him into a noble Family, to *Asenah*, the Daughter of † *Potipherah*, Priest, or Prince of *On*; by whom he had two Sons, the former of which he call'd *Manasseh*, intimating, that God had made him forget all his Toils; and the other *Ephraim*, because he had made him fruitful in the Land of his Affliction.

His wife Management.

IN the mean Time, *Joseph* being now about thirty Years old, when he was rais'd to this Height of Power, took a Progress through the whole Kingdom; built Granaries, appointed proper Officers in every Place, and, in short, order'd all Things with such Prudence and Application, that, before the seven Years of Plenty were expir'd, he had amass'd together an immense Quantity of Corn, enough to supply both *Egypt* and the neighbouring Countries; so that when the Years of Famine came on, and the People apply'd themselves to *Pharaoh*, he remitted them to *Joseph*, who, when he saw it fit, open'd his Stores, and sold Provision to all that came.

IN the second Year of the Famine, *Jacob*, who was not exempt from the common

Calamity, hearing that there was Corn to be bought in *Egypt*, sent ten of his Sons thither to buy some; who, upon their Arrival, were directed to apply to *Joseph* for an Order, and, as soon as they saw him, prostrated themselves before him, and begg'd that they might be supply'd with Corn.

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*JOSEPH*, at first Sight, knew his Brethren, but, being minded to terrify them a little, would not, as yet, discover himself to them; and therefore, chusing to speak by an Interpreter, with a severe Look and angry Tone, he ask'd them, whence they came, and, upon their answering, from the Land of *Canaan*, he charg'd them with being \* *Spies*, who were come to discover the Weakness of the Country. To which they replying, that they came with no other Intent, than purely to buy Corn for their numerous Family, being all the † Sons of one Man, who once indeed had twelve, but that the youngest was left at home, and the next to him dead; he immediately catch'd at their Words, and put their Honesty upon this Probation: — That, since, *as they said*, they

And Treatment of his Brethren, when they came to buy Corn.

something belonging to him: But here the Question is, what the Meaning of the Name, which *Pharaoh* gave *Joseph*, is? In the *Hebrew* Text it is *Zaphnah paaneah*, but, in the *Egyptian* and *Greek Pentateuch*, it is *Pson-thon-phanech*. The oriental Versions however, are pretty unanimous in rendering it, a *Revealer of Secrets*; but there are some Reasons, why this should not be its true Interpretation. For, the Time, when *Pharaoh* gave the Patriarch this Name, was when he advanc'd him, from the Condition of an imprison'd Slave, to that of a *Ruler throughout all the Land of Egypt*; and therefore it is reasonable to suppose, that he gave it in Commemoration of such Promotion, rather than of his expounding Dreams; because, to have call'd him an *Interpreter of Dreams* only, had been degrading him to the Level of *Magicians*. Now if *Pharaoh* gave him this Name in Memory of his Promotion, it is very likely, that this Name was strictly and properly *Egyptian*, (otherwise the common People could not have understood it) tho' *Moses*, in his recording it, might endeavour to accommodate it to the *Hebrew* Idiom; and if it was *Egyptian*, the Word in that Language signifies, what we call, a *Prime Minister*; or, strictly, the *first*, or *Prince of the Lords*. *Bibliotheca Bibl. Occas. Annot.* 41.

† The Reader must remember not to confound this Name with *Potiphar*, who bought *Joseph* of the *Ismaelites*, because their Names in *Hebrew* are not differently written. The one, however, is call'd the *Captain of the Guards*, the other the *Prince*, or *Priest of On*; so that the former must have had his Residence in the Capital, to be always about the King; but the latter liv'd at *On*, or *Heliopolis*, about twenty Miles distant from *Memphis*, the *Metropolis* of the Kingdom: Nor can we suppose, that *Joseph* would ever have married his Master's Daughter, lest she should have prov'd not unlike her Mother, for whose Incontinence he had so severely smarted. *Universal History*, l. 1. c. 7.

\* These Words, *Ye are Spies*, are not to be look'd upon as a *Lye*, because they are not spoken by Way of Affirmation, but of Probation only, in the Manner that Judges speak, when they examine suspected Persons, or enquire into a Crime, of which Men are accus'd; and have therefore the Force of an Interrogation, *Are ye not Spies?* or, I must take you to be such, until you prove the contrary. This, though it was but a pretensive Charge of *Joseph*, had yet the better Colour, because *Egypt* was defenceless, and liable to Incursions only on that Side, from whence his Brethren came; for, what with the Interposition of large Deserts, and shallow Seas, it was pretty well secur'd on all other Quarters. *Le Clerc's*, and *Patrick's* Commentaries in Locum.

† By this they suggested the Impossibility of their being *Spies*, since no Man, in his Wits, would send so many, and all his own Sons, upon so dangerous and capital an Enterprize: Nor was it probable, that one Man could have a Design upon *Egypt*, but all the great Men in *Canaan* must have join'd in it, and then they would have sent Men of different Families, and not all of one only. *Patrick's* Commentary.



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they had a younger Brother, some one of them should be dispatch'd to bring him, whilst the rest were kept in Custody ; otherwise he should look upon them, (and there he spake with a seeming Earnestness) as no other, than *Spies* and *Enemies* ; and so order'd them all to Prison, until they should come to a Resolution.

AFTER three Days Confinement however, he sent for them again, and then, with a milder Air, told them, that as himself *fear'd God*, and was willing to act justly by them, he was loath that their Family should want Provision, or that they themselves should suffer, if innocent ; he therefore propounded this Expedient to them : — “ That one of them should “ be confin'd, as an *Hostage* for the rest, “ while they return'd with Corn for the “ Family ; and that, when they came “ again, and brought their youngest Brother with them, the *Confin'd* should be “ releas'd, and all of them reputed *honest Men*.”

FOR Persons in their Circumstances there was no expostulating with one, who had them at his *Mercy* ; and therefore they consented to do whatever he requir'd. But, in the *Interpreter's* Absence, they, supposing that no one else understood their Language, began to bewail their unrelenting Cruelty to poor *Joseph*, and to condemn themselves severely for it ; while *Reuben* (who was not so culpable in the

Matter) put them in Mind, that all this Mischiefe might have been prevented, had they listen'd to his Counsel, and not acted so inhumanly to their innocent Brother, for whose Sake, it was no more, than what they might expect, that Vengeance, at one Time or other, would certainly overtake them.

THEIR Discourse, in short, was so very dolorous and affecting, that *Joseph* could no longer contain himself, and was therefore forc'd to withdraw a little, to give his Tears vent, and then coming in again, commanded † *Simeon* to be bound, and sent to Prison : But, setting the rest at Liberty, he order'd the Officer, who distributed the Corn, to supply them with what they wanted, and, at the same Time (as a fresh Matter for their Surprize) † to put each Man's Money into the Mouth of his Sack. His Orders were accordingly obey'd : And therefore, when they came to bait, and to give their Beasts Provender †, they were not a little frighten'd to find their Money return'd ; nor fail'd they to make all the dismal Reflections hereupon, that their Fears cou'd suggest, concluding that the haughty *Viceroy* had done this, that he might have a Pretence to make them his Slaves, at their next coming down.

As soon as they were got home, they acquainted their Father with all these Adventures ; they told him the Treatment, they

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Their Account to their Father Jacob, when they got home.

† It may be suppos'd perhaps, that, because *Reuben* was the eldest, he, upon this Occasion, had been the properest Hostage : But *Reuben*, we may observe, had shew'd himself averse to those Lengths of Wickedness and Inhumanity (in which most of the other Brothers were agreed) against *Joseph*. *Reuben*, in short, resolv'd to save him ; and, as *Judah* was inclin'd to favour him, had *Simeon* join'd with them, their Authority might have prevail'd for his Deliverance : But *Simeon* was the Person, who was most exasperated against him. He was the eldest of those, who had propos'd to murder him, and was therefore a fit Proxy for the rest ; the Man (as the *Hebrews* say) who put *Joseph* in the Pit, and was now very justly to be serv'd in his Kind : Tho' they, who tell us this, have a Tradition, that, as soon as his Brothers were gone, *Joseph* had him unbound, and order'd him what Provisions, and Conveniences he pleas'd, during his Confinement. *Patrick's Commentary*, and *Bibliotheca Bibl. in Locum*.

† This *Joseph* might do, without defrauding *Pharaoh* : For, he might either supply them out of that Stock of Provisions, which belong'd properly to himself ; or, if the Provisions were the King's, he might pay for them out of his own Purse. Nor is there any Occasion to conceive, that a Person, so entirely in Favour and Confidence with his Prince, as *Joseph* was, had his Hands tied up from disposing, at his own Discretion and Pleasure, of so small a Boon, as this, to his Friends, for their Relief and Comfort. *Musculus*.

† If it should be made a Question, why *Joseph's* Brethren made Use of their own Stocks, and especially in a Time of so great Scarcity, in a *publick Inn* ; the Answer is obvious : — That the Inns, or Resting-places, in those Parts of the World, neither were, nor are as yet, such as we meet with in *England*, and some other Parts of *Europe*. They afforded no Accommodation of any Kind, but barely House-room. The Passengers, who travell'd in those Countries, carry'd most, if not all, of their Provisions with them ; nor did they make any other Use of these *Publick-houses*, but only to repose themselves in, at the End of their Stages. *Musculus*.



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they had receiv'd from the King's *Prime-Minister*, and how he suspected them of being *Spies*, of which they had no Way to clear themselves, but by leaving *Simeon* bound in Prison, as a *Pledge*, till they shou'd bring *Benjamin*, to shew that what they told him of their Family was true. These were sad *Tydings* indeed, and what made their poor afflicted Father break out into this melancholy Complaint; " That, " one Way or other, him they *had depri-* " *ved* of his Children; that *Joseph* was " dead, *Simeon* was left in *Egypt*, and " now they were going to take *Benjamin* " from him likewise, which were Things " too heavy for him to bear."

IN vain it was for *Reuben*, in order to prevail with his Father to comply, to offer, (as he did) that, if he did not return him safe, he might take his two Sons, and kill them, if he pleas'd: The *Death* of a Grandson was no Compensation for the *Loss* of a Child; and therefore, instead of asswaging, this did but augment his Grief, and make him absolutely resolve not to trust *Benjamin* with them; for *his Brother is dead*, says he, *and he is left alone; if any Mischief should befall him by the Way, then will ye bring my grey Hairs with Sorrow to the Grave.*

IN such Debates as these they spent the Time, till the *Famine*, every Day increasing, and their Stock of Provision being well nigh gone, *Necessity* put them in the Thoughts of going down again into *Egypt*. This their Father likewise reminded them of, but without taking any

Notice of their Obligation to the *Viceroy* to bring their younger Brother with them; which when *Judah* suggested to him, and set before him, withal, the utter Impossibility of their going into *Egypt*, without his complying with that *Condition*, he began to complain again, that he thought himself hardly us'd in their telling the *Viceroy* any Thing of the State of his Family, or that they had another Brother; which *Judah* endeavour'd to excuse, by assuring his Father, that, what was said upon that Head, proceeded from the Simplicity of their Hearts, and in Answer to the *Interrogatories*, which the *Viceroy* put to them, without ever dreaming that he intended to make such a cruel Handle of it; and then, perceiving his Father to waver a little in his Resolution, † he reiterates the Necessity of their going again, and presses him to consent, with this solemn Promise, that, at the Hazard of his own Life, he would take care, and return him safe: (a) *Of my Hand shalt thou require him*, says he; *if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the Blame for ever.*

BUT it was not so much his Son's Importunity, as the Necessity of Affairs, which induc'd *Jacob* to comply, and therefore, perceiving that there was now no Remedy, he deliver'd up *Benjamin*; but, before they departed, instructed them what to do, viz. to take a double Quantity of Money with them, for fear that there was some Mistake made in the other, that was return'd, ‡ and some such Presents,

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† In the Text, the Words, wherein *Judah* delivers himself to his Father, are these ——— *If thou wilt send our Brother with us, we will go down and buy thee Food, but if thou wilt not send him, we will not go down*, Gen. xliii. 4, 5. which, at first View seems to have an Air of *Undutifulness* in them, but, upon a nearer Inspection, will admit of this Apology, viz. That this was not the first Proposal made to *Jacob* by his Sons, to have *Benjamin* go with them into *Egypt*. *Reuben* had once before offer'd his two Sons for Pledges, and receiv'd a Repulse. Upon *Jacob's* renewing his Orders therefore for them to go, *Judah* only had Courage to engage in this fresh Remonstrance. He reminds his Father, first of the Solemnity and Earnestness, with which *Joseph* had pretended, that, without *Benjamin*, *they shou'd not see his Face*: Then he offers to go very willingly in Obedience to his Father's Command, but desires to insist upon the Condition of *Benjamin's* going with them, as finally, indispensibly, and absolutely necessary. For the Words, compar'd with those of Gen. xlii. 26. do plainly denote as much, *we will not go down*, i. e. it is impossible, impracticable, unallowable for us to go. For the *future* Tense, according to the *Hebrew* Idiom, will bear this Signification, and consequently will acquit *Judah* from all Suspicion of Rebellion, or *Undutifulness* towards his Father. *Bibliotheca Bibl.* on Gen. Annot. 45.

(a) Gen. xliii. 9.

‡ The Present, which *Jacob* order'd his Sons to carry down to *Joseph*, is thus particulariz'd in our Translation: *a little Balm, a little Honey, Spices, and Myrrh, Nuts and Almonds*, Gen. xliii. 11. But there is Reason to suspect, that some



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fents, as the Country afforded, and what, *they imagin'd*, would be most acceptable to the Viceroy: And so, having intreated Heaven for their Success, he sent them away, with an aking Heart, but a resolv'd Acquiescence in God's good Providence, let the Event be what it wou'd.

Joseph's Treatment of them, upon their second coming into Egypt.

As soon as they arriv'd at *Egypt*, they went directly to the King's *Granaries*, and presented themselves before *Joseph*, who, seeing their Brother *Benjamin* with them, gave Orders to his Steward to conduct them to his House, where he design'd they should dine that Day. Here again they began to fear, lest this might be a Contrivance against them upon Account of the Money, which was return'd in their Sacks; and therefore, before they enter'd the House, they acquainted the Steward with the whole Affair; and, to demonstrate their Honesty, told him, that, besides the Money, which they found return'd, they had brought more along with them, to buy a fresh Quantity of Provision.

THE Steward, on the other Hand, being let into the Secret, and perceiving the Concern they were in, bad them dismiss all uneasy Apprehensions; told them, that what they found in their Sacks, they ought to look upon as a Treasure, sent them from Heaven; own'd that he himself had fairly receiv'd their Money, and gave them Assurance, that they should

never hear any more of it; and (that they might believe his Words to be true) he went, and brought *Simeon* unbound to them; acquainted them that they were to dine with his Lord that Day; and shew'd them, in the mean while, all the Tokens of Civility, that were fitting for welcome Guests.

JOSEPH was to return by Noon, and therefore his Brothers took Care to have their Present in Readiness; and, when he was come, introduc'd it in the handsomest, and most submissive Manner, they could. He receiv'd them all with a very friendly Countenance; enquir'd much concerning the Health and Welfare of their aged Father; and then, turning to *Benjamin*, ask'd them, if he was the younger Brother, they had mention'd to him; and, without staying for their Answer, saluted him in these Words, *God be gracious to thee, my Son*. But, finding his Affections begin to work, and fearing lest he shou'd discover himself too soon, he retir'd into his Chamber, and there vented his Passion in a Flood of Tears; which when he had done, he wash'd his Face, and return'd to the Company, and order'd the Dinner to be serv'd up.

THREE Tables were spread in a large *Dining-room*; one for himself alone, by Reason of his Dignity; another for his *Egyptian-Guests*, \* who hate to eat with People of a different Nation; and a third for

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some of these are not the real Things, which the original Words intend. *Balm* indeed (which we may suppose was that of *Gilead*) was of great Price all the World over, and a small Quantity of it was a Present worth Acceptance; but unless the *Honey* in *Canaan* was better than ordinary, there doubtless was no Want of it in *Egypt*: And therefore it is much more likely, that this Part of the Present consisted of *Dates*, since the *Hebrew* expresses both by the same Name, and, in *Judea*, especially about *Jericho*, (as both *Josephus*, and *Pliny* tell us) there was great Plenty of them. The Word *Nekoth*, which is render'd *Spices*, should rather signify *Storax*, which is an *aromatick* Gum, put into all precious spicy Ointments: And the Word *Loth*, which is translated *Myrrh*, would come nearer the Original, if it were call'd *Landanum*. *Botnim*, which we read *Nuts*, are what we call *Pistachioes*, which were highly esteem'd by the Antients, as a delicious Food; and with these Almonds perhaps might not improperly be join'd together. Universal History, and *Patrick's* Commentary.

\* The Reason, which some assign for the *Egyptians* refusing to eat with the *Hebrews*, was their sacrificing some Creatures, which the *Egyptians* worshipp'd: But, tho', in after Ages, they certainly did worship several Kinds of Animals, yet there appears nothing from the Story, that they did so in *Joseph's* Days; for their Worship of the famous Ox, call'd *Apis*, was a much later Invention, as many learned Men have demonstrated. It is much more likely therefore, that this great Abhorrence should be resolv'd into their different Manner, both of dressing, and eating their Victuals. No People, as *Herodotus* tells, [even where he treats of their Manner of Feasting, *Europe* c. 28.] were more tenacious of their old Customs, than the *Egyptians*. They would not use those of any other Nation whatever; and therefore the *Hebrews* were not the only People, they had an Aversion to. For (as the same Historian informs us) an *Egyptian* Man, or Woman, wou'd not kiss the Mouth of a *Greek*; would not make use of a Spit, or a Pot belonging to them: nor eat any Meat, that was cut with one of their Knives. *Patrick's*, and *Le Clerc's* Commentary.



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for his Brethren, who were amaz'd to find themselves plac'd in exact Order, according to their *Seniority*, and did not a little wonder what this unexpected Civility might end in.

*JOSEPH* however, during the whole Entertainment, behav'd very courteously. From his own Table † he sent Dishes to every one of his Brothers, but to *Benjamin* he sent five Dishes for each of their one; which was another Mystery, they could not unriddle; however, for the present, they were very chearful and merry.

AFTER they had eat, and drank very plentifully, they began to think of taking their Leave, and of going about the Affair, for which they came; but *Joseph* had one Fright more in reserve for them, and therefore he order'd his Steward, when he fill'd their Sacks with Corn, to return their Money (as he had done before) but, into *Benjamin's* Sack, not only to put his Money, but the Silver Cup likewise, wherein he himself us'd to drink, and, after they were gone a little Way out of Town, to go, and overtake them, and charge them with *Felony*.

THE Steward did as he was commanded: And, when he came up with *Joseph's* Brethren, upbraided them with Ingratitude, in so badly requiting his Lord's Civility, as to steal away his Cup. Conscious of their own Innocence, and disdainful of so vile a Charge, they put the Matter upon this short Issue:—That, whoever, upon Search, should be found to have the Cup, should be given up to suffer Death,

and themselves become all his Lord's Bond-Slaves. So said, so done: The Beasts were unloaded: The Sacks were search'd: And, to their great Astonishment and Surprise, the Cup was found in *Benjamin's*. To no Purpose it was for the poor Youth to say any Thing in his own Defence: Upon such a Demonstration none would believe him: And yet, being all concern'd in the Disgrace, they loaded their Asses again, and, in a mournful Manner, returned to the City.

*JOSEPH* was at home, expecting their Return, and when they came before him, reprimanded them very sharply, while they lay prostrate at his Feet, and † acknowledged their Guilt; but, in the Conclusion of his Speech, he assur'd them, that the Person only, who was detected in the Theft, should remain a Slave: the rest might return home, when they pleas'd, to their Father.

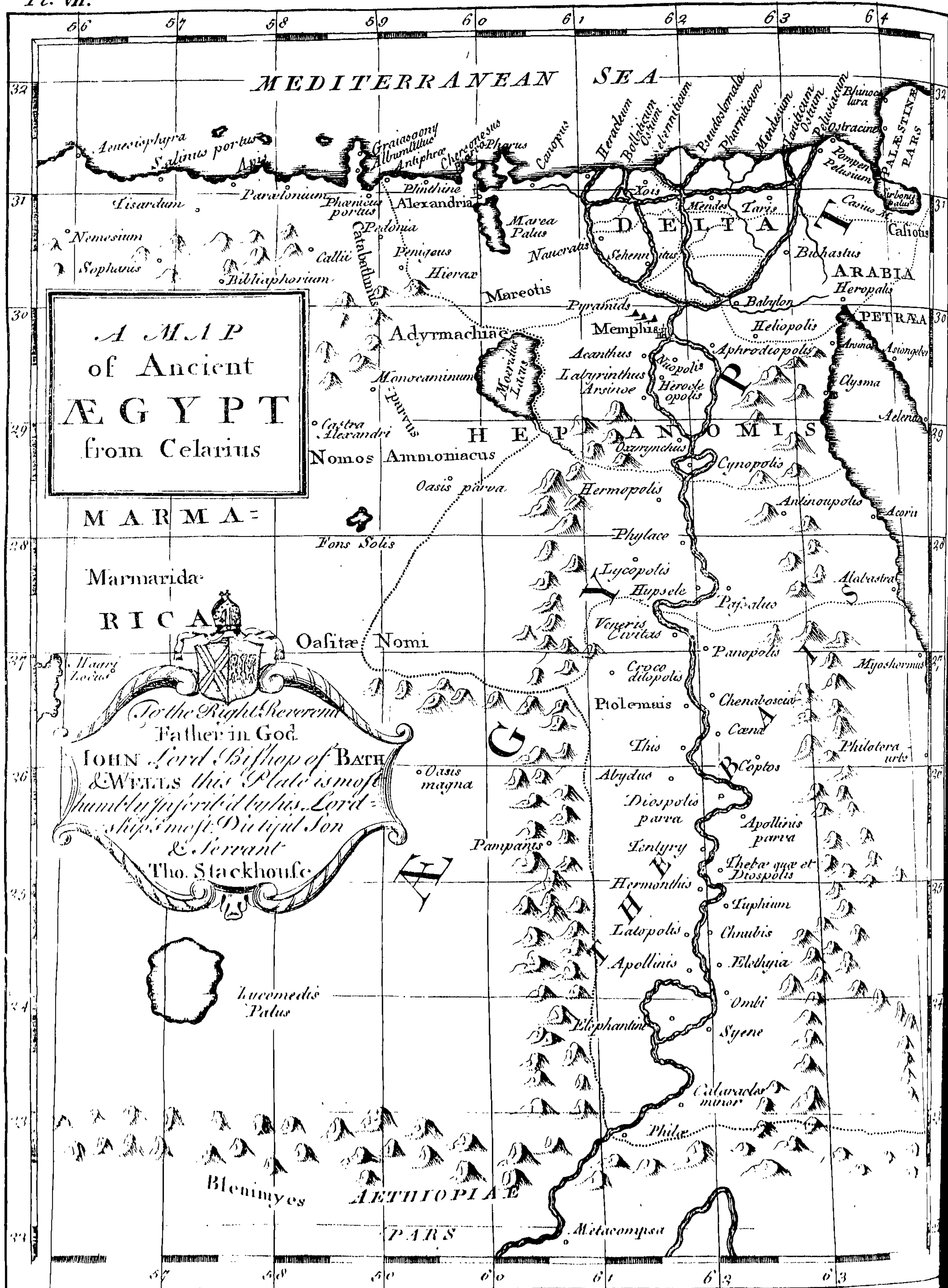
*JUDAH*, who had taken *Benjamin* under his Care, being, by this Time, recover'd from his Surprise, drew near, and address'd *Joseph* in the most submissive and pathetick Terms. He acquainted him with the whole Case between them, and their Father, in Relation to their bringing *Benjamin* into *Egypt*, to take away the Suspicion of their being *Spies*. He describ'd very passionately their Father's melancholy Condition for the Loss of his Son *Joseph*; the extreme Fondness he had for his Son *Benjamin*; the Difficulty they were under, to prevail with him to trust him with them, so that he himself was forc'd

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† The Manner of eating among the Antients, was not for all the Company to eat out of one and the same Dish, but for every one to have one or more Dishes to himself. The whole of these Dishes were set before the Master of the Feast, and he distributed to every one his Portion. As *Joseph* however is here said to have had a Table to himself, we may suppose, that he had a great Variety of little Dishes, or Plates set before him; and, as it was a Custom for great Men to honour those, who were in their Favour, by sending such Dishes to them, as were first serv'd up to themselves, *Joseph* shew'd that Token of Respect to his Brethren: But, to express a particular Value for *Benjamin*, he sent him five Dishes to their one, which Disproportion cou'd not but be marvellous and astonishing to them, if what *Herodotus* tells us be true, l. 6. c. 27. viz. "that the Distinction in this Case, even to *Egyptian* Kings themselves, in all publick Feasts and Banquets, was no more than a double Measure." *Patrick's Commentary*, and *Bibliotheca Bibl.*

† *Judah*, in Behalf of himself, and his Brethren, might very well have pleaded in Defence, that they receiv'd their Sacks from the Officer, tied up as they were, without ever once opening them; and that the same Hand, which now, for this two Times, had return'd their Money, was the most likely to have convey'd the Cup into them: But since there was a manifest Juggle in the Thing, he was fearful of irritating the Governor, if he should go about to detect it, and therefore he thought that the best Way, for him and his Brethren to escape, was to acknowledge the Crime, though they were innocent of it, and (as if they had no Perception of the Trick, that was put upon them) to implore his Pity and Compassion, by Arguments taken from other Topics. *Le Clerc's Commentary*.







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forc'd to become Security for his safe Return; and that, if he should go home without him, his Father's Life was so wrapt up in the Child, that he would certainly die with Grief. Rather therefore than see this Grief of his aged Father, and his grey Hairs with Sorrow descending to the Grave, he offer'd himself an *Equivalent* for his Brother: (b) *Now therefore, I beseech thee, my Lord, let me, thy Servant, abide here a Slave, instead of the Lad, and let him go up with his Brethren; for how shall I see my Father without him?* This moving Speech, and generous Offer, were what *Joseph's* Soul could not withstand, and therefore, being able to contain himself no longer, he order'd all the Company to leave the Room, that he might have a more affectionate Freedom in discovering himself to his Brethren.

His discovering himself to them.

BUT, no sooner had he told them, that he was *Joseph their Brother* (which was all that his full Heart would let him utter) than, reflecting upon what they had once done to him, they were all struck with such a Surprise and Confusion, that for a long Time, they could make him no Answer.

As soon however, as he had recover'd himself, he desir'd them to draw near unto him; he embrac'd them all round with an unfeign'd Tendernefs; and, to dispel all farther Apprehensions, told them, that their selling him into *Egypt* was directed by an unforeseen Providence; that therefore they had no Reason to be angry with themselves, for doing it, since they were no more than the *Instruments* in God's Hand, to bring about what his eternal Purpose had determin'd; that he had no Reason to resent it, since, by that Means, he had been advanc'd to the Honour and Dignity of being Governor of all *Egypt*; nor his Father, or any of his Family, to murmur at it, since God had appointed this Method for the Preservation of their Lives. For five Years more, he told them, there were to be of the Famine; and therefore he bid them hasten into *Canaan*, and tell

his Father of all his Glory and Greatness, and desire him to come down, that he might take care of him, and feed him in this Time of *Dearth*, and provide him with a Country, (even *the Land of Goshen*) not far distant from him, and very commodious for such, as led a *pastoral* Life. All this, he own'd, would be strange and surprizing for them to tell; but their Father would hardly doubt the Testimony of so many *Eye-witnesses*; above all, he would not fail to believe what his Favourite *Benjamin* told him: And, with that, he threw himself upon *Benjamin's* Neck, kiss'd him, and wept over him for Joy; and having treated all the rest in the same kind Manner, and as a Person, that was perfectly reconcil'd to them, they began to take Courage, and convers'd more familiarly with him.

A RUMOUR, in the mean Time, was spread thro' the Court, that *Joseph's* Brethren were come to buy Corn, which, when *Pharaoh* heard, he sent for him, and told him, that since his Father's Family was so numerous, and the Famine, as yet, not half over, his best Way would be to send for them, and place them in what Part of the Country, he thought fit; for that they should never want Provisions, or any other Favour, that he could shew them. He put him in Mind likewise to send them a fresh Supply of Corn, and whatever else he thought would be necessary in their Journey, with Chariots and Waggon, to bring down their Wives and Children, and the best of their *Moveables*.

*JOSEPH* gladly obey'd the King's Command: And (besides the Chariots and Provisions) sent to his Father ten Asses, laden with the choicest Commodities of *Egypt*; to his Brethren he gave each of them Changes of Garments, but to *Benjamin* he gave *five*, with three hundred Pieces of Silver; and so dismiss'd them with this kind Charge, that they should not fall out by the Way. With Hearts full of Joy they proceeded in their Journey to *Canaan*, and were gladly receiv'd by their good

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Their Account  
of all this, to  
their Father  
Jacob.

good old Father, especially upon the Return of his two Sons, *Simeon* and *Benjamin*, whom he scarce expected to have seen any more. But when they inform'd him, that his Son *Joseph* was likewise alive, and in what Pomp and Splendor he liv'd; that he was the very Man, the King's *Prime-Minister* and Governor of *Egypt*; who had put them in so many deadly Frights; being not able to bear so much good News at once, he *fainted* away in their Arms: But when he came to himself again, and they shew'd him the Presents, which *Joseph* had sent, and the Chariots and Carriages, which were come to take him, and his Goods away, his Spirits reviv'd, his Doubts and his Fears vanish'd, and, in an Extasy of Joy, he cry'd out, (c) *It is enough! Joseph, my Son, is yet alive; I will go and see him, before I die.*

To see so dear a Son, for whom he had mourn'd so long, in all his *Egyptian* State and Glory, was enough to make him hasten his Journey; but, as his Gratitude to God, for all his late Mercies vouchsaf'd unto

him, and his farther Want of the divine Protection, to accompany him into *Egypt*, requir'd some fresh Act of Religion from him, he chose to go to *Beersheba*, and there offer some Sacrifices, both because it was the Place, where *Abraham* and *Isaac* had liv'd so long, and because it was in the Way to *Egypt*, as being the utmost Boundary of *Canaan* towards the South.

HERE it was that God appear'd to him again in a Vision; bid him † not fear to go down into *Egypt*, since he would be with him, and protect him, and, in due Time, bring his Posterity out of it again to enter into the Possession of the *promis'd Land*; and that, as to his own *Particular*, he should live near his beloved *Joseph*, die in his Arms, and † have his Eyes clos'd by his Hand. So that, encourag'd by this divine Promise, *Jacob* left *Beersheba*, and cheerfully pursu'd his Journey into *Egypt*, where, when he arriv'd, † he, and his Family made up, in all, just || the Complement of seventy Persons.

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Jacob goes  
down into  
Egypt, and  
is joyfully re-  
ceiv'd by his  
Son Joseph.

As

(c) Gen. xlv. 28.

† It is not unlikely, that the good old Man had promis'd himself the Comfort of spending the Remainder of his Days in the Land, which God had been pleas'd to promise him; and therefore, after so much Labour of Life, and Change of Place, when he thought himself at the End of his *Pilgrimage*, and perhaps depended upon the *Patriarchal* Line being put in Possession before his Death, to be oblig'd to leave his Land, and to go into a foreign one, was not a little discouraging; especially if he retain'd in his Mind the melancholy Prediction to his Grandfather, Gen. xv. 13. *Know of a Surety, that thy Seed shall be a Stranger in a Land, that is not theirs, four hundred Years, and shall serve them.* Bibliotheca Bibl. in Locum.

† There seems to be something of a Reason in Nature, why such a particular Regard should be had, at Death, to the Eyes; and that is, because they are in Life so eminently serviceable both to Body and Mind. We close the Eyes of the Dead, because no Part of the Body looks so ghastly after Death, whereas nothing was so sprightly and beautiful before: And the Reason why the nearest in Blood or Friendship should have this Office, is too obvious to need any Explication.

Dii precor hoc jubeant, ut euntibus ordine fatis,

Illo meos oculos comprimat, ille tuos.

Penel. ad Ulyss. de Telemach.

† The whole Account of *Jacob's* Sons and Grandsons, who went along with him into *Egypt*, stands thus, — By *Leah* 32; by *Zilpah* 16; by *Rachel* 11; by *Bilhah* 7: In all 66, exclusive of *Jacob* himself, and of *Joseph*, and his two Sons, which make up the 70: And 'twas necessary indeed, that these *Genealogies* should be exactly register'd, not only to distinguish each *Tribe*, and thereby discover the *Messias*, when he came; but (as it is in the Case before us) to make it apparent, that the Increase of *Israel*, even under Oppression, should bear a fair Proportion to the Promise made to *Abraham*, viz. *That his Seed should be even as the Stars of Heaven, and as the Sand upon the Sea-shore, for Multitude.* Universal History, and Bibliotheca Bibl.

|| There are three different Accounts in Scripture of the Number of *Jacob's* Family, when they came down into *Egypt*. In Gen. xlv. 26. it is said, that *all the Souls, which came with Jacob into Egypt, were threescore and six*: In the very next Verse, and in Deut. x. 22. it is said, that *they were threescore and ten*; and yet St Stephen, in Acts vii. 14. tells us expressly, that they were *seventy five*. Now, in order to reconcile these seeming Contradictions, we must observe, that in each Place there is a different Manner of Computation. In the first Catalogue, *Moses* speaks of those Persons only, who came out of *Jacob's* Loins, i. e. his Children and Grandchildren, that went into *Egypt* with him; and these, exclusive of *Jacob* himself, and *Joseph* and his two Sons, who were in *Egypt* before, were exactly *sixty six*: Whereas, including *Jacob* himself, together with *Joseph* and his Sons, *Ephraim*, and *Manasseh*, (who, tho' they were in *Egypt* before, yet, living there as Strangers only, and having their Original from the

Land



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As soon as he came within the Borders of *Egypt*, not far from the Land of *Goshen*, he sent *Judah* before to acquaint his Son *Joseph*, with his Arrival; who instantly took his Chariot, with a Retinue, suitable to his high Station, and, with infinite Satisfaction, congratulated his Arrival at a Place, where he had it in his Power to make his Life happy and comfortable. What the Expressions of *filial* Duty, and *paternal* Affection were upon this Occasion, Words cannot describe: Tears of Joy flow'd from both Sides; and, while the Son was contemplating the Goodness of God, in bringing him to the Sight of his aged Father, the Father, on the other hand, thought all his Happiness upon Earth compleated in this *Interview*; and therefore, (d) *Now let me die*, says he to his Son, *since I have seen thy Face, because thou art yet alive.*

As soon as these tender Greetings, and the solemn Rejoicings, which follow'd upon them, were over, *Joseph* propos'd to his Father and Brethren, to go, and acquaint *Pharaoh* with their Arrival: And, as he suppos'd, that the King would have a Curiosity to see some of them, he gave them in Charge, that, in Case he should ask them what Occupation they were of, their Answer should be, that they were *Shepherds*, as their Ancestors, for many Generations, had been before them; by which Means he might † secure for them the *Land of Goshen*, which would be a separate Habitation, and an happy Retreat from the Insults of the *Egyptians*, who were known † to have an utter Detestation to Shepherds.

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WITH this Caution he took five of his Brothers along with him; and, having inform'd *Pharaoh*, that his Father and Family

Land of *Canaan*, may be reckon'd, as if they had come into *Egypt* with *Jacob* the Number is exactly seventy. The Difference between *Moses* and St *Stephen* is a little more difficult to reconcile; and yet, if we suppose, that St *Stephen* follows the first Number of *Moses*, viz. *sixty-six*, out of which he excludes *Jacob*, *Joseph* and his two Sons, and to which he adds only nine of his Sons Wives (for *Judah's* Wife was already dead, and *Benjamin* is suppos'd to be still unmarried, and *Joseph's* Wife out of the Case) these nine Wives, I say, which tho' not of *Jacob's* Blood, yet belong'd to his Family, and to *Joseph's* Kindred (which is the very Expression St *Stephen* makes Use of) added to the Number of *sixty-six* other Persons, will amount exactly to *seventy-five*. *Patrick's Commentary*, *Universal and Howell's Histories*.

(d) Gen. xvi. 30.

† By the general Consent of *ancient Geographers*, the Land of *Goshen* is situate in the *Eastern Part* of *Egypt*, between the *Red-Sea*, and the River *Nile*, upon the Borders of *Canaan*. It was a fruitful Spot of Ground, very fit for Pasturage, and therefore *Josephus* tells us, that *Pharaoh's* own Cattle were kept there, and accordingly we find him ordering *Joseph* to make one of his Brothers the *Inspector-General* over them. The Country was separate from *Egypt*; And, for this Reason, the *Israelites*, inhabiting it, might keep themselves in a Body, without endangering their Religion or Manners, by intermixing with the *Egyptians*, and without incurring their Envy or Odium, as they would have done, had they liv'd among them, and shar'd any Power or Profit in the Government. They came down into *Egypt* upon a particular Exigency, and were to return again, to take Possession of the *promis'd Land*; and therefore a Country, that lay in a Manner contiguous to it, was the most convenient for their Abode, that they might be in Readiness to remove, whenever God should order them to leave it, which they would not have found so easy a Thing to do, had they been settled in the Heart of *Egypt*. *Pool's Annotations*.

† The Country of *Egypt* (as *Diodorus* tells us, l. i.) was divided into three Parts, whereof the *Priests* had one, the King a second, and the *Soldiery* a third: But, under these, there were three other Ranks of Men, *Shepherds*, *Husbandmen*, and *Artificers*. The *Husbandmen* serv'd the King, and the other two Orders, in tilling the Ground, for very small Wages, and so did the *Shepherds*, in their Capacities; for the *Egyptians*, we must remember, had Sheep and Oxen, as well as Horses and Asses, which they sold unto *Joseph*, in the Time of the Famine. It cannot be thought therefore, that they abominated all Shepherds in general, but only such *Shepherds* as were *Foreigners*, and for what Reason it was that they did this, is not so easy a Matter to resolve. Some are of Opinion, that Shepherds were held in Detestation, because they were a People, in those Days, addicted to *Robbery*, which made them very odious to the *Egyptians*: But others imagine, that Theft, among the *Egyptians*, was not reputed so abominable a Crime; and therefore they think, that the most probable Reason of this Aversion to Shepherds, and to the *Hebrews*, as such, was the great Oppression, and Tyranny, under which they had lately groan'd, when the *Phœnician* Shepherds penetrated *Egypt*, walled their Cities, burnt their Temples, murder'd the Inhabitants, and seated themselves, for a considerable while, in the Possession of it. But, upon whatever Account it was, that the *Egyptians* had this Aversion to Shepherds, it certainly was an Instance of *Joseph's* great Modesty and Love of Truth, that he was not ashamed of an Employment, so mean in itself, and so vile in the Eyes of the *Egyptians*. Had he been minded to make the most of the Matter, he might have instructed his Brothers to have conceal'd their Way, or Business of Life; or, if he was aware, that they would



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Family were come as far as *Goshen*, he presented his Brothers to the King, who, for his Sake, receiv'd them very graciously, and when he ask'd them, what Profession they were of, they told him that they were Shepherds, as their Family, for many Generations had been; that Want of Water for their Cattle, and of Sustenance for themselves, had made them leave *Canaan*; but that since (as they understood) his Majesty had been so hospitable, as to give them Reception in his Dominions, they humbly pray'd, that they might be allow'd to settle in *Goshen*, as a Country most convenient for their Purpose: Which he readily granted, and offer'd moreover to make any one of them, whom *Joseph* should appoint, his *royal* Shepherd.

Has an Interview with the King, and settles at Goshen.

NOT long after this, *Joseph*, in like Manner, presented his Father to *Pharaoh*, who, seeing him look very hail and hearty, and desirous to know of what Age he might be, was inform'd by *Jacob*, that he was † an *hundred and thirty*; which when the King seem'd to wonder at, he told him moreover, that his Life was not, as yet, near so long, as that of some of his Ancestors, because his Fate had been to have too large a Share of Troubles and Fatigues to *barrafs*, and wear him out: And so, wishing his Majesty Abundance of Health and Prosperity, he return'd to *Goshen*, where *Joseph* took care to supply him, and all his Family, with such a plen-

tiful Provision of Corn, and other Necessaries from the King's Storehouses, as, in the Time of the greatest Scarceness, made him insensible of any Want.

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BUT while *Jacob* and his Family liv'd in Plenty, the *Egyptians* found the sad Effects of the *Famine*, which increasing daily upon them, and *Joseph* holding up his Corn at an high Rate, in a short Time brought all their Money into the King's Coffers; and, when their Money was gone, they were all (except the *Priests*, who were furnish'd from the King's Stores) oblig'd to part with their Cattle, their Houses, their Lands, and, || at length, their *very selves*, for Provision. All these *Joseph* purchas'd of the People in the King's Name, and for the King's Use; and, to let them see, that the Purchase was in earnest, and that their Liberties and Properties were now become the King's, he transplanted them, from their former Places of Abode, into distant and different Parts of the Kingdom, that they might in Time lose the very Remembrance of their antient Possessions.

*Joseph's wise Management in Egypt.*

THIS, in another Person, might have been thought an immoderate *Zeal* for an *absolute* Power in the King, and an Advantage unjustly taken of the Necessities of the Subject; but *Joseph* so manag'd the Matter, as to gain the Commendation of both Prince and People. For, when the *seventh*, and last Year of Famine was come,

would follow the same in *Egypt*, that they had done in *Canaan*, he might nevertheless have put into their Mouths the high Dignity of their Descent, and the wonderful History of their Family, viz. that *Abraham* was their great Grandfather, a Prince renown'd for his Defeat of four confederated Monarchs; that *Isaac* was their Grandfather, whose Amity and Alliance had been courted by Kings; and that *Israel* was their Father, who once gain'd a Victory even over a mighty Prince of the celestial Host; all great Men in their Generations, and dignified with the Conversation of God himself. This, and a great deal more, had *Joseph* been minded to serve the Purposes of Vanity, he might have suggested to his Brethren; but, by his open Declaration, we may perceive, that his Pleasure and Ambition was, that the wonderful Chain of the divine Measures and Counsels, in bringing him, from an humble Condition of Life, to such a Sublimity of Power and Figure, might be as conspicuous as possible. *Pool's Annotations, Patrick's Commentary, and Bibliotheca Bibl. in Locum.*

† *Pharaoh's* Question to *Jacob*, and *Jacob's* Answer, we may suppose, were not all the Discourse, that pass'd between them, but only what most deserv'd to be mention'd, because (as the learned *Pererius* observes) this Answer of *Jacob's* is the very *Hinge* upon which the whole *Chronology* of the patriarchal Times turns. The same excellent Commentator remarks, that, tho' *Jacob* liv'd seventeen Years after this, yet, even at last, he did not attain to the *Days of the Years of the Life of his Fathers*; since his Father *Isaac* liv'd an hundred and fourscore Years, and his Grandfather *Abraham* to an hundred and seventy five. *Bibliotheca Bibl.*

|| When the *Egyptians* were drove to this last Extremity, in our Translation it is said to be in the *second Year*; but this must not be understood to be the *second Year* of the seven Years of Famine, but the *second* after that last mention'd, wherein they had sold their Cattle, which was in reality the *last Year* of the Famine; because he now gave them Corn for *Seed*, as well as for *Food*; whereas, in the first Years, there was neither *sowing* nor *reaping*. Gen. xlv. 6. *Pool's Annotations.*



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come, he acquainted them, that they might now expect a Crop against next Year; that the Nile would overflow, and the Earth bring forth her Fruits, as usual. Hereupon he distributed fresh Lands, Cattle, and Corn to them, that they might return to their Tillage, as before; but upon this Condition he did it, that, from thenceforward, the *fifth* Part of all the Product of their Lands should go to the King, and the rest be theirs. To these Conditions the People willingly consented, as imputing the Preservation of their Lives intirely to *Joseph's* Care; and from that Time it pass'd into a Law, that the fifth Part of the Product of the Land of *Egypt* should always belong to the Crown.

WHILST *Joseph* was enjoying the Fruits of his great Success and Policy, his Family at *Goshen*, (which he visit'd not frequently to visit) became very wealthy, and very numerous, till, at length, his Father *Jacob*, finding himself grow old and feeble, and perceiving that his latter End was near approaching, sent for him, and to this Purpose address'd himself to him. "Tho'

the Desire of seeing a Son, so dear to me as you are, rais'd to the Height of *Egyptian* Glory, join'd to the raging *Famine*, which then visit'd our Land, made me willingly come down into this strange Country; yet *Canaan*, being the Inheritance, which God promis'd to *Abraham* and his Posterity, and where he lies interr'd with my Father *Isaac*, and some other of our Family, in the Ground, which he purchas'd of the Inhabitants for that Purpose; my last, and dying Request to you is, † that you will not suffer me to be buried here; but swear to see me carried to *Machpelah*, and there deposited with my Ancestors. Your great Power with the King will easily obtain that Favour, which is the last I have to ask." *Joseph* was not long before he gave his Father a satisfactory Answer. He promis'd, and he swore to him, that he would fulfil his Desire, which pleas'd the good old Man to that Degree, that || he bow'd, and made his Acknowledgment for this kind Assurance.

JOSEPH,

† Tho' there be something of a natural Desire in most Men to be buried in the Places, where their *Ancestors* lie; yet *Jacob's* Aversion to have his Remains deposited in *Egypt* seems to be more earnest than ordinary, or otherwise he would never have impos'd an Oath upon his Sons, and charg'd them all, with his dying Breath, not to suffer it to be done. For he very well knew, that had his Body been buried in *Egypt*, his Posterity, upon that very Account, would have been too much wedded to the Country, ever to attempt the Acquisition of the *promis'd Land*; and therefore, to wean them from the Thoughts of continuing in *Egypt*, and fix their Minds and Affections in *Canaan*, he order'd his Body to be carried thither beforehand, in Testimony, that he died in full Persuasion of the Truth of the Promises, which were given to him, and his Ancestors: Nor was it inconvenient, that future Generations, after their Return into *Canaan*, should have before their Eyes the Sepulchre of their Forefathers, for a Record of their Virtues, and an Incitement to the Imitation of them. But the strongest Motive of all for *Jacob's* desiring to be buried in *Canaan* (supposing that he foreknew that our Saviour *Christ* was to live and die; and, with some others, rise again in that Country) was, that he might be one of that *bless'd* Number; as it was indeed an antient Tradition in the Church, that, among those, who came out of their Graves after our Lord's Resurrection, Matth. xxvii. 53. the Patriarch *Jacob* was one. *Pool's* Annotations, and *Bibliotheca Bibl.*

|| The Words in our Translation are, *he bowed himself upon the Bed's Head*, Gen. xlvii. 31. where some Expositors, presuming that his *Bowing* was a religious Action, will, by no Means, have it directed to *Joseph*, but to God only, for the Assurance, which *Joseph* had given him, that he should be buried according to his Desire. But, if the Word must be translated *bowed*, there is no Necessity to make it an Act of Adoration, but only a common Form of Civility, wherewith a Father might comply, without any Diminution to his Superiority over his Son. What led these Expositors into this Conception, was the Version of the *Septuagint*, and the Words of the Apostle to the *Hebrews*, where *Jacob* is said (in Allusion, as they suppose, to this Passage) to have *worshipped upon the Top of his Staff*, Heb. xi. 21. But the plain Truth is, that the Apostle here speaks of another Thing; not of what *Jacob* did now, when *Joseph* swore unto him, but of what he did, when he bless'd his other Children. In the former Case, he seems to have kept his Bed; but, in the latter, to have receiv'd fresh Spirits, and sat upon it, though leaning perhaps upon his Staff. So that, the Apostle's Words are not taken from these of *Moses*, but are a Reflection of his own, whereby he signifies the Strength of *Jacob's* Faith, even when he was so weak, as not to be able to bow himself, and worship, without the Help of his Staff. This clearly removes the Difficulty, and reconciles *Moses* and the Apostle very perfectly; but there seems to be a more compendious Way of doing this. For, since the Word *Schabab*, which signifies *to bow the Body*, may, in like Manner, be render'd to *lie*, or *fall down*, the most easy Translation seems to be, *he laid himself down upon his Pillow*, as weak Men are wont to do, after they have set up a while, to dispatch some Business. *Patrick's* and *Le Clerc's* Commentaries.

His visiting  
his Father be-  
fore he died.



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**JOSEPH**, who could not be long absent from Court, took his Leave of his Father, but not without giving strict Charge to some of the Family, that, upon the very first Appearance of Danger, they should immediately send for him. Accordingly, as soon as Word was brought him, that his Father was a-dying, he took his two Sons, *Manasseh*, and *Ephraim*, with him, and went to visit him; who, when he heard that his favourite Son was come, summon'd all his Spirits together, and was so far reviv'd, as to be able to sit up in his Bed.

H E R E he began with recapitulating all the glorious Promises, which God had formerly made him, concerning his numerous Posterity's inhabiting the Land of *Canaan*, and concluded † with the Death of his dear *Rachel*. “How tenderly I lov'd her, *continued he*, all my Family can testify; but this farther Proof I design to give you of my Affection to her. You have two Sons, born in a foreign Country, and who, according to the usual Order of Inheritance, should have only the Portion of *Grandchildren* in the Division of the *promis'd Land*; but, from this Day forward, they shall be call'd by my Name, be esteem'd my Sons, and as Heads of two distinct *Tribes* (for they shall not be call'd the Tribe of *Joseph*, but the Tribe of *Ephraim* and *Manasseh*) receive a double Portion in that Allotment; But it must not be so with the other Sons, which you beget after these. They come in only for the Portion of *Grandchildren*: And to you

“in particular, I bequeath that Tract of Ground, which, by the Force of Arms I took from the *Amorites*, that it may descend to your *Tribe* for ever.”

ALL this while *Jacob*, whose Sight was very much decay'd, talk'd to his Son concerning his Children, as if they had been absent; but, when he perceiv'd that they were in the Room, he rejoic'd not a little, and order'd them to be brought near him. *Joseph* plac'd them in a Position, according to the Order of their Age, to receive his Father's Blessing; but *Jacob*, crossing his Hands, laid his *right* (which carry'd with it the Preference) upon the *Younger*, and his *left* upon the *Elder* of them; which *Joseph* supposing to proceed from a Mistake, was going to rectify, but was told by his Father, that what he did was by divine Direction, and so made *Ephraim* not only the first in Nomination, but gave him a Blessing much more extensive, than what he gave his Brother.

By this Time, *Jacob* finding himself grow faint, and the Hour of his Departure near approaching, call'd the rest of his Sons together, to take his Farewel of them, and distribute his Blessing, or rather to foretel what should befall them, and their Posterity, in future Ages: And so, directing his Speech to them severally, he began with *Reuben* the eldest, and told him,—That, for the Crime of Incest, in polluting his Father's Bed, he, and his Tribe were degraded † from the Privileges of his Birth-right. He told *Simeon* and *Levi*, (whom he join'd together upon this Occasion) that, for their impious Massacre of

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*Hamor*

† Since *Jacob* had so strictly insist'd upon his being buried with his Father, and bound *Joseph* with an Oath to see it done, it was proper for him to explain and clear himself, as to what might be secretly objected to his not interring *Rachel*, (*Joseph's* own, and his best beloved Consort) in that *Burying-place*, where he so earnestly desir'd to lie himself; and for his Excuse in this Respect, he had two Things to offer; 1<sup>st</sup>, That he was then upon his Journey, and in his Return from *Padan*; and 2<sup>dly</sup>, That he had erected a *monumental Pillar* upon her Grave, in a very publick and frequented Place: To which a *Right Reverend Commentator* has added a further Apology. — That, as she died in Child-bed, and *Jacob*, in his Travels, might not have all Things necessary to preserve her Body long, he was constrain'd to bury her sooner perhaps, than otherwise he would have done. *Patrick's Commentary*, and *Bibliotheca Ribi. in Locum*.

† The Privileges of the Birth-right consist'd chiefly, in the Honour of the Priesthood, in the Rule and Government of the Family, and in a double Portion of the Inheritance, which, at this Time, were all taken away from *Reuben*, and divided severally; since it appears in the Sequel of the History, that the Tribe of *Reuben* continu'd all along in Obscurity, while the Priesthood was conferr'd on *Levi*, the Government on *Judah*, and the double Portion on *Joseph*, to descend to their respective Tribes. *Howell's History of the Bible*.



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*Hamor* and his People, † their Tribes shou'd for ever be separate and *dispers'd* among the other; but then, turning to *Judah*, he prophesied of him, that to his Tribe shou'd the *Sovereignty* belong, and they be † situated in a very fruitful Country; that from his Name shou'd the whole Nation of the *Jews* derive their Appellation; and that the Form of Government, which he then instituted, shou'd endure among them, until the *Messiah* came. † Of *Zebulun* he foretold, that his Tribe shou'd be planted near the Sea-coasts; and † of *Issachar*, that *his* shou'd prove a pusillanimous People, and be Lovers of inglorious Ease, more than of Liberty and Renown.

FROM *Leah's* Sons the Patriarch passes to those of his two *concubinary* Wives; and † of *Dan's* Posterity he foretels; that tho' they were descended from an Handmaid, yet they shou'd have the same Privileges with the other Tribes, shou'd become a politick People, and greatly vers'd in the Stratagems of War; of † *Gad's*, that they shou'd be frequently infested with *Robbers*, but overcome them at last; of *Asher's*, that they shou'd be situated in a fruitful and exuberantly rich Soil; and † of *Naphtali's*, that they shou'd spread their Branches like an Oak, and multiply exceedingly.

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### JACOB

† *Jacob's* Words, in this Place, may imply a double Dispersion, viz. of the two Tribes from each other; and of their being interspers'd among the rest: And, accordingly, that of *Levi* had no *Inheritance* among his Brethren, in the *Land of Canaan*, but only a certain Number of Cities assign'd to them in every Tribe. And, as for that of *Simeon*, they had properly no more, than a Portion of *Judah's* Inheritance, *Josh. xix. 1.* if we except some few Places, which they got upon Mount *Seir*, and in the Wilds of the Valley of *Gedor*, *1 Chron. vi. 39, &c. Universal History, l. 1. c. 7.*

† The Country, which the Tribe of *Judah* was to inhabit, is thus describ'd by *Jacob*: *Binding his Fole unto the Vine, and his Ass unto the choice Vine; he washed his Garments in Wine, and his Cloaths in the Blood of Grapes*, *Gen. xlix. 11.* which are Expressions somewhat *hyperbolical*: (For they imply, that Vines, in this Country, shou'd be as common as Thorns in other Places; and Wine as plentiful as Water) but were, in a great Measure, answer'd in that fertile Land, which fell to the Tribe of *Judah's* Share. For here was the Valley of *Escol*, a Bunch of whose Grapes was brought by the *Spies* as a Specimen of the Fruitfulness of the Land, *Numb. xiii. 23.* Here was a *Brook*, or *Torrent*, of the same Name, along whose Banks were the most delicious Pasture-Grounds for Cattle; and, as modern Travellers tell us, here are very large Grapes still to be met with, especially in the Valley of *Hebron*, which, in all Probability, is that, through which this *Torrent* runs. *Pool's Annotations, Bibliotheca Bibl. and Universal History, l. 1. c. 7.*

† Had *Jacob* been present at the Division of the Land of *Canaan*, he cou'd hardly have given a more exact Description of *Zebulun's* Lot, than we find him doing, two hundred and fifty Years before it happen'd. For it extended from the *Mediterranean-Sea* on the West, to the Lake of *Genesareth* on the East, and lay therefore very commodiously for Trade and Navigation. The foretelling so precisely and distinctly the Situation and Employment of this Tribe, tho', at first Appearance, it may seem a Matter of no great Moment, yet will be found to be quite otherwise, when it is consider'd, that such *Particularities* as these could not but be very convincing to the *Israelites*, that it was not Chance, nor Power, nor Policy, that put them in Possession of the Land of *Canaan*, but *God's Right-Hand, and his Arm, and the Light of his Countenance, because he had a Favour unto them.*

† No less remarkable is the Description of *Issachar's* Tribe, since, tho' they were a very laborious People in all rural Employments, yet they had no great Inclination to War; and were therefore frequently infested, and subjected by Strangers, especially in the Time of the Judges.

† The *Jews* think, that the Prophecy of *Dan's* destroying his Enemies by Craft, was more particularly fulfill'd, when *Sampson*, who was of that Tribe, pull'd down the Temple, which crush'd himself and the *Philistines* to death.

† *Gad's* Lot happen'd on the other Side of *Jordan*, where they were continually expos'd to the Incursions of the bordering *Arabs*; but, by their Watchfulness and Bravery, they not only prevented them, but several Times caught, and plunder'd them in their Turns, in so much, that in one Battle, they took from them fifty thousand Camels, two hundred and fifty thousand Sheep, besides an hundred thousand Men Prisoners, *Deut. xxxiii. 22, &c.*

‡ The Words in our Translation, *Naphtali is a Hind let loose, he giveth goodly Words*, are very obscure, and scarce intelligible. For tho' the former Part of the Prediction is commonly apply'd to *Barak's* overcoming *Sisrah*, and the latter to that noble *Canticle*, which *Deborah* made upon that Occasion; yet the Exposition, which the learned *Bochart* gives us of this Passage, *He shall be like a Tree, which shooteth out pleasant Branches*, is both more agreeable to the Original, and more answerable to the Event; since no Tribe multiply'd so wonderfully, as this of *Naphtali*, who had but four Sons, when he came into *Egypt*, and yet could muster upwards of fifty-three thousand Men fit to bear Arms, when he came out of it, i. e. in less than 220 Years. Essay towards a new Translation.



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JACOB had reserv'd the Sons of his beloved *Rachel* to the last ; and therefore, turning to † *Joseph*, at the same Time that he recollects his past Troubles, and sets forth the future Greatness of his Tribe, he pours down upon him, and, in him, upon his Posterity, Benedictions of all Kinds. “ The Lord, even the God of thy Fathers, *says he*, shall bless thee “ *with the Dew of Heaven*, and with the “ *Fatness of the Earth*, with the *Fruit of the Womb*, i. e. with a numerous Posterity, and with the *Fruit of the Breast*, “ with Plenty of all Sorts of Cattle. May “ all the Blessings, promis'd to me and “ my Forefathers, be doubl'd upon *Joseph's* royal Head ; may they out-top “ and out-stretch the everlasting Mountains, and prove to him more fruitful, “ and more lasting, than they.”

WHETHER *Jacob* might foresee no Merit or Happiness extraordinary in the Tribe of *Benjamin*, or that its being afterwards blended with the Tribe of *Judah*

might make it partake of the same Blessing ; but so it was, that he contented himself with describing its † fierce and warlike Disposition, which, like a ravenous *Wolf*, would shed the Blood of its Enemies, and in the Evening divide their Spoil.

THUS the good old Patriarch having given his † Blessing to his Children, according to the divine Direction, and not according to his own Inclination, reminded them all, (but *Joseph* more especially) to bury him among his Ancestors, in the Cave of *Machpelah* ; and so laying himself down in his Bed again, in a short Time expir'd, after he had liv'd 147 Years in all, and seventeen of these in *Egypt*.

THE Loss of so good a Father, was doubtless lamented by all his Family, but by none with more sincere Expressions of filial Sorrow, than by *Joseph*. At length, remembering his dying Charge, he order'd his Physicians (according to the Custom of the Country) to \* embalm his Father's Body, and all Preparations for his Funeral to

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eral.

† In the Benediction, which *Jacob* gives his Favourite *Joseph*, there are two remarkable Titles, which he confers upon him. 1st, *That he was the Shepherd, and the Stone of Israel*, which seems to be a thankful Recognition of *Joseph's* Kindness to his Father and Family, in keeping, and feeding them, even as a *Shepherd* does his *Sheep* ; by which Means he became the *Foundation*, or *Base*, as it were, of the House of *Jacob*, by preserving them from perishing by *Famine*, and continuing them settl'd in the best Part of the *Egyptian* Kingdom, for a considerable Time : Tho' some refer it rather to his virtuous resisting the Temptations of his Mistress, and patiently enduring the Master's Severity, to both of which he remain'd as immovable, as a *Stone*. 2d, The other Title is, that he was *separate from his Brethren* : Where, tho' the Word *Nazir* signifies to *separate* (as *Joseph* was certainly separated from his Brethren, when he was sold into *Egypt*) yet, as it is hardly supposable, that *Jacob* would couch so cruel an Action in so soft a Term, 'tis rather to be thought, that he us'd the Word *Nazir*, which signifies *crown'd*, in Allusion to the Superintendants of the King's Household, in all the *Eastern* Countries, who were call'd *Nazirs*, and wore probably some Kind of *Diadem* about their Heads, by Way of Distinction and Grandeur. And, as for the Fruitfulness promis'd to *Joseph*, this was exemplify'd in the large Extent of his two-fold Tribe, *Ephraim* and *Manassah*, which at their first numbering yielded seventy-two thousand seven hundred, *Numb. i.* and at their second, eighty-five thousand, and two hundred Men, all able to go out to War, *Numb. xxvi.*

† How brave and warlike a Body of Men, and how very expert in Feats of Arms, this Tribe became, we may conceive from what we are told of them, viz. that there were seven hundred chosen Men among them, left-handed, every one of whom could sling Stones at an Hair's Breadth, and not miss, *Judges xx. 16.* And how pertinacious they were in their Undertakings of this Kind, is manifest, both from the fierce Battles, which they fought against all the other Tribes, (tho' in a very bad Cause, *Judges xix.*) wherein they twice came off Conquerors ; and from the long Opposition, which the House of *Saul*, descended from this Tribe, made against the Accession of *David* to the Throne, and which cou'd not be suppress'd, until *Abner*, the General of their Forces, had forsok them, *Judges*, and *1 Sam. passim.*

† Besides these Prophecies of *Jacob*, which were sufficiently verified by their Events, the *Jeaus* ascribe some other Works to him, viz. a Treatise, entitled, *The Ladder to Heaven*, and another call'd, *Jacob's Testament*, which *Pope Gelasius* reckons among the *apocrypha* ; together with some Forms of Prayer, which the *Jeaus* use every Night, and pretend that they were compos'd by him. As to the Commendations, which they so plentifully bestow upon this Patriarch, these, in a great Measure, are justify'd by the Character, which the Author of *Ecclesiasticus* gives him, *Chap. xlv. 23.* And, as the *Mahometans* allow him not only to be a Prophet, but the Father likewise of all the Prophets, except *Job*, *Yethro*, and *Mahomet* ; so they believe, that the Royal Dignity did not depart from his Posterity, until the Times of *John the Baptist*, and *Jesus Christ* ; and that from him the Twelve Tribes of the *Jeaus* did spring, even as their own Twelve did from *Ismael*. *Calmet's Dictionary*, under the Word *Jacob*.

\* The Manner of embalming among the *Egyptians*, according to *Herodotus*, *Diodorus*, and others, was as follows. When a Man died, his Body was carry'd to the Artificer's, whose Business it was to make Collins. The upper Part of



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to be made. For the Space of *seventy Days* they continu'd their Mourning for him ; † in which Time it being improper for *Joseph* to appear at Court, he desir'd some of the Officers about the King to acquaint his Majesty, that his Father, before his Death, had oblig'd him, upon Oath, to bury him in a Sepulchre belonging to their Family, in the Land of *Canaan* ; and that therefore he begg'd Leave to go, and fulfil his last Commands, and wou'd, without Delay, return again. The King readily consented to his Request, and order'd moreover the chief Officers of his House-

hold, and some of the principal Nobility of the Kingdom, to attend the Funeral, who, join'd with his own, and his Father's whole Family, some in Chariots, and some on Horseback, made \* a very large and pompous Procession.

As soon as they were enter'd into the Land of *Canaan*, they made an Halt at † the *Threshing-Floor of Atad*, and there continu'd mourning, and lamenting the Death of their Friend and Father, seven Days ; which made the *Canaanites*, perceiving that the Company came from *Egypt*, call the Place, *Abel-mizraim*, or the

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of the Coffin represented the Person, who was to be put in it, whether Man or Woman ; and (if a Person of Distinction) was generally adorn'd with such Paintings and Embellishments, as were suitable to its Quality. When the Body was brought home again, they agreed with the Embalmers ; but, according to the Quality of the Person, the Prices were different. The highest was a Talent, *i. e.* about three hundred Pounds Sterling ; twenty *Minae* was a moderate one ; and the lowest a very small Matter. As the Body lay extended, one of them, whom they call'd the *Designer*, mark'd out the Place, on the left Side, where it was to be open'd, and then a *Dissector*, with a very sharp *Egyptian Stone*, made the Incision, through which they drew all the Intestines, except the Heart and Kidneys, and then wash'd them with Palm-Wine, and other strong and binding Drugs. The Brains they drew through the Nostrils, with an hook'd Piece of Iron, made particularly for that Purpose, and fill'd the *Skull* with astringent Drugs. The whole Body they anointed with Oil of *Cedar*, with Myrrh, Cinnamon, and other Drugs, for about thirty Days, by which Means it was preserv'd *intire*, without so much as losing its Hair, and *sweet*, without any Signs of Putrefaction. After this, it was put into Salt, about forty Days ; and therefore when *Moses* says, that *forty Days* were employ'd in embalming *Jacob*, Gen. i. 3. he must mean the forty Days of his continuing in the Salt of Nitre, without including the *thirty Days*, that were spent in the other Operations above-mention'd ; so that, in the whole, they mourn'd seventy Days in *Egypt*, as *Moses* likewise observes. Last of all, the Body was taken out of this Salt, wash'd, and wrapp'd up in Linnen Swaddling-bands dipp'd in Myrrh, and rubb'd with a certain Gum, which the *Egyptians* us'd instead of Glue, and so return'd to the Relations, who put it into the *Coffin*, and kept it in some Repository in their Houses, or in *Tombs*, made particularly for that Purpose. *Calmet's Dictionary*, under the Word *Embaln*, and *Warburton's Divine Legation*, Vol. II. l. 3.

† It was against Rule, for any Person, how great soever, in Mourning Apparel, to appear in Publick, and especially in the Royal Presence, because, in that State, they were look'd upon as *defil'd* ; and therefore *Joseph* does not go himself, but desires some of the Courtiers to carry his Request to the King : And this Request he was the rather bound to make, because the Retinue and Guard, which the Pomp of the Funeral, and the Danger of Molestation from Enemies, made necessary, cou'd not be obtain'd without the King's Leave. *Musculus*.

\* The Splendor and Magnificence of our Patriarch's Funeral seems to be without a Parallel in History. What hitherto has most affected me in the Comparison, were indeed the noble *Obsequies* of *Marcellus*, as *Virgil* has describ'd them ; but how do even these (with all their *Parade* of Poetry about them) fall short of the plain and simple Narrative before us ? For what are the *six hundred Beds*, for which the *Roman* Solemnities, on this Occasion, were so famous, in Comparison of that *national itinerant* Multitude, *which swell'd like a Flood*, and *mov'd like a River* ; to all *Pharaoh's Servants*, to the *Elders of his House*, and all the *Elders of the Land of Egypt*, *i. e.* to the Officers of his Household, and Deputies of his Provinces, with all the *House of Joseph*, and his *Brethren*, and his *Father's House*, conducting their solemn Sorrow for near three hundred Miles into a distant Country ? *Bibliotheca Bibl. Occas. Annot.* 46.

† The Words in the Text are, ——— *And they came to the threshing Floor of Atad, which is beyond Jordan*, Gen. i. 10. Where this Place was, we cannot determine from any Account in Scripture ; but it is very probable, that it lay not far from the Place, where *Jacob* was buried, and so not far from *Hebron*. For since it is absurd to suppose, that the Corps of *Jacob* was carried to the Cave of *Machpelah*, such a round-about Way, as the *Israelites* went afterwards into the Land of *Canaan*, *viz.* through *Arabia Petraea*, quite on the Eastern Side of *Jordan*, it remains to suppose, that these Places are said to be *beyond Jordan*, not in respect of *Egypt*, from whence *Jacob's* Corps was brought, but in respect of the Place, where *Moses* was, when he wrote the History, *i. e.* in a Country in the East of *Jordan* ; and consequently the Places *beyond Jordan*, must be such, as lay on the West of *Jordan* : But why they made the *Threshing-Floor of Atad*, rather than the Place of Interment, the Scene of their Lamentations, is not so easy to resolve. Perhaps it was a Place more convenient to stay in for *seven Days*, than the Field of *Machpelah* ; or perhaps it might be the Custom, at the very Entrance of the Country, where they carry'd the Corps to be bury'd, to fall into Lamentations, which they might repeat at the Grave again, though no mention be made of it here. *Well's Geography of the Old Testament*, Vol. I. and *Patrick's Commentary*.



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the Mourning of the *Egyptians*, ever after. They thence continu'd their March, till they came to the Field of *Machpelah*, where \* they deposited *Jacob* in the Cave with his Ancestors, and so return'd to *Egypt* again.

Joseph's Promises to his Brothers.

As soon as their Father was bury'd, *Joseph's* Brethren began to reflect on the Wrongs they had formerly done him, and were not a little apprehensive, that, as he certainly had it in his Power, he might now have it in his Intention, to avenge himself of them: And therefore they consulted together, and fram'd this Message, — That it was his Father's earnest Request, that he should forget all past Injuries, and continue them under his Protection, as formerly. This when *Joseph* heard, such was his compassionate Temper, that he could not refrain from weeping; and therefore (to remove their Fears) he sent immediately for them, and, receiving them with the same kind Affection, as when their Father was alive, excus'd the Actions, committed against him, in such an obliging Manner, and gave them

such fresh Assurances of his future Love, and Adherence to them upon all Occasions, as made them return to their Families full of Joy and Satisfaction.

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\* THE *Sacred History* gives us no further Account of any Particulars in *Joseph's* Life, though he liv'd fifty four Years after his Father's Death. It informs us, that he liv'd to see himself the happy Parent of a numerous Offspring, in his two Sons *Ephraim* and *Manasseh*, even to the third Generation; and all this while, we may presume, that he continu'd in high Favour with his Prince, and in weighty Employments under him. But, when he grew old, and found his Death approaching, he sent for his Brethren, and, with the like *prophetic* Spirit, that his Father *Jacob* had done, told them, that God, according to his Promise, would not fail to bring their Posterity out of *Egypt*, into the Land of *Canaan*; and therefore he made them swear to him (as he had done to his Father) that, when it should please God thus to visit them, they would not forget to † carry his Body along with them: And to this

And his Death.

\* The *Jeauish* Doctors have a Tradition of a bloody Fight, which *Joseph* had, at his Father's Funeral, with one *Tzepho*, the Son of *Eliphaz*, who wou'd have oppos'd his burying him in the Cave of *Machpelah*, as disputing his Title to the Ground; but that *Joseph*, and his Men, having overcome him, carry'd him away with them into *Egypt*, and kept him there Prisoner, as long as *Joseph* liv'd; however, as soon as he was dead, *Tzepho* found Means to escape into *Italy*. Universal History in the Notes, I. 1. c. 7.

\* The Author of *Ecclesiasticus* has given us an Encomium of the Patriarch *Joseph* in these Words: Of *Jacob* was this Man of Mercy born, who found Favour in the Eyes of all Flesh. He was born to be the Prince of his Brethren, and the Support of his Family; to be the Head of his Kinsmen, and the firm Support of his People. His Bones were visited, and prophesied after his Death, Chap. xlix. 15. His Meaning is, that his Bones were remov'd out of *Egypt*, and that this fell out as a Consequence of his Prophecy, that God wou'd visit the *Hebrews*, and bring them into the promis'd Land. The *Jeauish* Rabbins have taken a great Latitude in ascribing several Particulars to this great Man, which have not the least Foundation in Scripture. They make him the Inventor of all the Arts and Sciences, for which the *Egyptians* afterwards became so famous; and attribute to him the Composition of several Books, such as *Joseph's Prayer*, *Joseph's Mirror*, &c. which do not so much redound to his Credit. *Mahomet*, in his *Alcoran*, [Surat 12] relates his History at length, but blends it with many fabulous Circumstances, which have been much improv'd by the Eastern People; for they make him, in a manner, greater than the *Jeauish* Doctors do. They tell us equally, that he taught the *Egyptians* the most sublime Sciences, and particularly *Geometry*, which was highly necessary in their Division of the Land. They suppose, that all the Wells, and Baths, and Graineries, which go under his Name, nay, that all the antient *Pyramids* and *Obelisks*, tho' they do not, were of his Erection; and they believe, that he had all along upon his Shoulder a Point of Light, like a Star, which was an indelible Mark of the Gift of Prophecy; with many more Fictions of the like Nature. *Cabnet's* Dictionary, under the Word *Joseph*.

† There are several Reasons, which might induce *Joseph* not to have his dead Body immediately carry'd into *Canaan*, and bury'd, as his Father's was. 1st, Because his Brethren, after his Decease, might not have Interest enough at Court to provide themselves with such Things, as were necessary to set off the Pomp and Solemnity of a Funeral befitting so great a Personage. 2dly, Because he might foresee, that the *Egyptians*, in all Probability, as long as their Veneration for his Memory was warm, wou'd hardly have suffer'd his Remains to have been carry'd into another Country. 3dly, Because the Continuance of his Remains among them might be a Means to preserve the Remembrance of the Services, he had done them, and thereby an Inducement to them to treat the Relations, he had left behind him, with more Kindness. 4thly, And chiefly, because the Presence of his Body with the *Israelites* might be a Pledge to assure them, and a Means to strengthen and confirm their Faith and Hope in God's Promises to their



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this Purpose, as soon as he was dead, (which was in the hundred and tenth Year of his Age) they had his Body

embalm'd, and \* kept in a Coffin, until the Time of their Deliverance should come.

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## The OBJECTION.

THE History of *Joseph* is as little liable to Exceptions, as almost any Portion of Scripture; and yet therein we meet with some Facts, that are not so agreeable to our Apprehensions, nor consonant to the Character of that holy Patriarch. For, to pass by *Jacob's Farewel*, which seems rather to curse, than bless his Children, besides the many odd Comparisons, that attend it; what shall we say to *Joseph's* marrying into an idolatrous Family, and swearing so frequently by the Life of *Pharaoh*; to his practising (as his Steward insinuates) *Arts of Divination*, and advising the King to take the Advantage of a Famine, (at the Hazard of a Mutiny) in order to impoverish all his Subjects, except the Priests; and what is more than all, to his cruel Usage of his Brethren, and putting his aged Father into so many Frights? His Care and Concern for the Support of his Father, while he liv'd, and for his honourable Interment, when he came to die, was highly commendable without doubt: But we cannot but think, that the Sacred Historian was minded to aggrandize his Port and Manner of Living, when he represents him, as (e) commanding his Servants the Physicians to embalm his Father. For, besides the extravagant Piece of State of having such a Body of *Domesticks* about him;

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(f) there is Reason to presume, that the Science of *Physick*, properly so called, was not at this Time, so much as profess'd in *Egypt*, as it certainly was not in *Greece*, until *Hippocrates* brought it into Request: And, consequently, that the Physicians, which *Moses* here mentions, in order to display poor *Joseph's* Magnificence, were no better, than a Company of *Dissectors* and *Embalmers*, which *Egypt* was known to abound with.

HOWEVER this be, it is hardly supposable, that *Joseph* should, in so short a Time, as *Moses* allows him, acquire a Knowledge of the *Egyptian* Language, sufficient to qualify him for the Office of *Potiphar's* Steward; nor can we conceive the Reason, why his Master, if he believ'd his Wife, and suppos'd him guilty of invading his Bed, did not immediately put him to Death. But, the greatest Wonder of all is, how this same *Potiphar* could be call'd an *Eunuch*, when it is so notorious, that he had a Wife: How *Jacob* can say of himself, that he got a Tract of Ground with his Sword and his Bow, when it is so well known, that he was a peaceable Man, and was never engag'd in War; or how the famous Prophecy of the Sceptre's not departing from *Judah* can be said to have been fulfill'd in its appointed Time, when the Jews (it must

5 N

" be

their Progenitors, that he would infallibly put their Posterity in Possession of the Land of *Canaan*: And accordingly, when *Moses* deliver'd them out of *Egypt*, he carry'd *Joseph's* Body along with him [*Exod.* xiii. 19.] and committed it to the Care of the Tribe of *Ephraim*, who buried it near *Shechem*; [*Josh.* xxiv. 32.] in the Field which *Jacob*, a little before his Death, gave to *Joseph*, as his peculiar Property. *Perrin's* and *Patrick's* Commentaries. *Pool's* Annotations and *Calmet's* Dictionary under the Word.

\* The Jewish Rabbins have a Story, that the Egyptian Magicians came and told *Pharaoh*, that if he had a mind to keep the Hebrews in his Dominions, he must hide *Joseph's* Body in some certain Place, where they shou'd never find it, because it wou'd be impossible for them to go out of *Egypt* without it; that thereupon his Body was put into a Chest of 6000 lb. Weight, which was sunk in the Mud of one of the Branches of the River *Nile*; and that *Moses* was forc'd to work a Miracle to get it out, and carry it away. *Calmet*, *ibid.*

(e) Gen. 1. 2.

(f) *Shuckford's* Connection, Vol. II. l. 9.



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Answer'd, by  
showing that  
the Prophecy,  
concerning Ju-  
dah's Sceptre  
was fulfill'd  
in due Time.

" be own'd) had lost all Government of  
" their own, and were subject to other  
" Nations, long before the *Messias* came."

THE most material Objection we have plac'd at last; and, because it relates to a Passage in Scripture, which is known to have its Difficulties, it may not be improper, in order to give it a clear Solution, first to cite the Passage itself, and then to explain the Terms, contain'd in it: (g) *The Sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a Law-giver from between his Feet, until Shiloh come, and unto him shall the Gathering of the People be.*

1. Now the Word *Shevet*, which we render *Sceptre*, has both a *literal*, and a *figurative Signification*. In its *literal*, it denotes a *Rod*, a *Wand*, a *Sceptre*, a *Shepherd's Crook*, &c. and in its *figurative*, it either implies the Correction and Punishment, whereof the *Rod*, or the Authority and Power, whereof the *Sceptre*, is the Ensign. It cannot be doubted, I think, but that the Word is to be taken in a *figurative* Sense here; and yet it cannot be suppos'd to signify *Punishment*, because the Tribe of *Judah* was so far from being in a State of Affliction, that it always flourish'd exceedingly, and, even in the Time of its *Captivity*, enjoy'd its own Form of *Government*. The Word must therefore, in this Place, be put for that *Power* and *Dominion*, whereof the *Sceptre*, in antient Times, was thought a fitter Representation, than either the *Crown* or *Diadem*.

2. THE Word *Mechokek*, which we translate *Law-giver*, is not *synonymous* with the former, but has two distinct Significations. It sometimes signifies, not a Person who has Power to make Laws himself, but only to *teach* and *instruct* others in those Laws, that are already made: And, in this Sense, it differs very little from the *Scribes*, and *Doctors*, and Teachers of the Law, whereof there is so much mention made in our *Saviour's* Days. At other Times, it denotes a Person, invest'd with Power and Autho-

rity even to make Laws, but then this Authority of his is inferior to that of a King; so that properly he may be call'd an inferior *Magistrate*, or Governor, set over a People, by the Licence of some *Monarch*, and, by his Commission, appointed to rule: And in this Sense the Word should rather be taken here, because there were such *Governors* and *Deputies* set over the *Jews*, after their Return from the *Babylonish Captivity*.

3. THE Phrase, which we render *between his Feet*, (according to the Modesty of the Scripture Expression) means nothing else, but *of his Seed* or Posterity; and so the Intendment of this Part of the Prediction must be, that *the Tribe of Judah should have Law-givers of their own to the very last Times*.

4. FROM whatever *Radix* it is, that the Word *Shiloh* is deriv'd, both *Jews* and *Christians* are agreed in this, that, by the Person, to whom this Title is apply'd, the *Patriarch* intended the great Saviour of the World, who is call'd the *Messias*, or Christ.

5. BY *Judah* here, there is not an absolute Necessity to understand the People of that *Tribe* only, but all those likewise, who were afterwards call'd *Jews*. And, 6. Whether we refer the *Gathering* of the People to the *Tribe of Judah* (as they did in the Times of the *Captivity*) or to *Shiloh*, when he should come, as to the Main of the Prophecy, there is not a great deal of Difference; since the Main of the Prophecy is, — *That the Messias should come, before the Jewish Government would totally cease*. And therefore the Question is, whether there was any Form of Government, subsisting among the *Jews*, and particularly in the *Tribe of Judah*, at the Time when *Christ* was born.

THE Form of Government, which *Jacob*, upon his Death-bed, instituted, was that of dividing his Family into *Tribes*, and making his own, and the two Sons of *Joseph*, Heads over their respective Houses. This Government was properly

*Aristocratical*:

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*Aristocratical:* But, in Times of some extraordinary Exigence, all Authority was devolv'd into the Hands of a *Judge*, who, when the End, for which he was appointed, was effected, (in the same Manner as the *Roman Dictator* did) resign'd up his Power, and became no more than *one of the Princes of the Tribes of his Fathers*.

THE Abuse of this *judicial* Power however, in the Hands of *Samuel's* Sons, made the People desirous of a *regal* Government; and in that *Form* it continu'd, from the Time it came into *David's* Hand, (who was of the Tribe of *Judah*) for the Space of four hundred and seventy Years. The Division of the Kingdom made a great Alteration in the Fortunes of the *People*, for the *Assyrian* Captivity was the Ruin of the ten Tribes. They lost their Government, and from that Time never recover'd it; but it was not so with the Kingdom of *Judah*, in the *Babylonish*: (b) For, if we consider, that the *Jews* were carried to *Babylon*, not to be Slaves, but were transplanted as a *Colony*, to people that large City; that they were commanded therefore, (i) by the Prophet, to *build Houses*, and *plant Gardens*, and to seek the *Peace of the City*, in which they were Captives; and, that upon the Expiration of their seventy Years Captivity, many of them were so well settled in Ease and Plenty, that they refus'd to return to their own Country again. If we consider farther, that the *Jews* liv'd at *Babylon* as a distinct People, and were govern'd, in their own Affairs, by their own Elders; that they appointed Feasts and Fasts, and order'd all other Matters relating to their Civil and Ecclesiastical State among themselves; and that, upon their Return from *Babylon*, they were thought a People considerable enough to be complain'd of to *Artaxerxes*: We cannot but conclude, that they made all along a Figure, far from comporting with the Condition of mere *Slaves*, subjected entirely

to a foreign Yoke, without any Law, or Government of their own.

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AFTER the Time of this Captivity indeed, the *Jews* were never so free a People, as they had been before. They liv'd under the Subjection of the *Persian* Monarch, and under the Empire of the *Greeks* and *Romans*, to their last Destruction; but still they liv'd as a distinct People, govern'd by their own Laws; and the Authority of the *Persian*, and other Kings, over them, destroy'd not that *Rule*, which, in all the Vicissitudes that befel them, they still possess'd.

How the Case stood, in the Time of the *Asmonæan* Princes, may be collected from several Passages in the *Maccabees*: And that the like Government subsisted, to the very Death of Christ, may, in like Manner, be evinc'd from many Instances in the *Gospel*; but one or two of these will be enough to illustrate the Thing.

WHEN our Saviour tells the *Jews*, (k) *The Truth shall make you free*, and they reply, *We are Abraham's Children, and were never in Bondage to any Man*, surely they had not forgot their Captivity in *Babylon*, much less could they be ignorant of the Power of the *Romans* over them at that Time; and yet they accounted themselves *free*, and so they were, because they liv'd by their own Laws, and executed Judgment among themselves. When our Saviour foretels his Disciples, that they (l) *should be deliver'd up to Councils, and scourg'd in Synagogues*, he shews, at the same Time, what Power and Authority were exercis'd in the Councils, and Synagogues of the *Jews*: And (to mention but one Instance more) when *Pilate*, willing to deliver *Jesus*, says to the *Jews*, (m) *Take ye him, and crucify him*; and again, (n) *Take ye him, and judge him according to your own Law*; he likewise shews, that the *Jews* liv'd under their own Law, and had the Exercise of *judicial* Authority among themselves.

By

(b) Bishop *Sherlock's* third Dissertation, annex'd to his *Use and Intent of Prophecy*.

(i) Jer. xxix. 5, 7.

(k) John viii. 32, 33.

(l) Matth. x. 71.

(m) John xix. 6.

(n) Chap. xviii. 31.



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By this Deduction it appears evidently, that the *Sceptre*, plac'd in the Hand of *Judah*, by his Father *Jacob*, just before his Death, continu'd in his Posterity, till the very Death of Christ. From that Time all Things began to work towards the Destruction of the *Jewish* Polity, and, within a few Years, their City, Temple, and Government were utterly ruin'd, and the *Jews* not carry'd into a gentle Captivity, to enjoy their Laws, and live as a distinct People, in a foreign Country; but were sold, like Beasts in a Market, became Slaves in the strictest Sense, and, from that Day to this, have neither Prince, nor Law-giver among them: So that, upon the Whole, (o) the Sense of *Jacob's* Prophecy, with relation to *Judah*, as it is now fulfill'd, may not improperly be summ'd up in this Paraphrase.

“ THE Power and Authority, which  
“ shall be establish'd in the Posterity of  
“ *Judah*, shall not be taken from them,  
“ or, at least, they shall not be destitute  
“ of Rulers and Governors; (no, not when  
“ they are in their *declining* Condition)  
“ until the Coming of the *Messiah*. But,  
“ when he is come, there shall be no Dif-  
“ ference between the *Jews* and *Gentiles*,  
“ who shall be all obedient to the *Messiah*:  
“ And, after *that*, the Posterity of *Judah*  
“ shall have neither *King*, nor Ruler of  
“ their own, but their whole Common-  
“ wealth shall quite lose all Form, and  
“ never recover it again.”

How Jacob  
may be said to  
have taken a  
Tract of Land  
by Force of  
Arms.

THE *Bequest*, which *Jacob* makes to his Son *Joseph*, runs into this Form: — (p) Moreover, I have given to thee one Portion above thy Brethren, which I took out of the Hand of the Amorite, with my Sword, and with my Bow. But when did we ever read of *Jacob's* being a military Man? His Sons indeed invaded *Shechem*, and took, not from the *Amorites*, but the *Hivites*, the adjacent Country, as we may suppose; but so far is he from approving of what they did, that, to his very dying Hour, we find him

severely remonstrating against it; and must therefore be suppos'd too conscientious, either to retain himself, or to consign to his beloved Son, a Portion of Land, acquir'd by such wicked and *sanguinary* Means.

From Gen.  
xxxvii. to the  
End.

THE Tract of Ground therefore, which he mentions, must certainly be that, (q) which he purchas'd of *Hamor*, the Father of *Shechem*; which he gave *Joseph* for a Burying-place, and where *Joseph*, in Consequence of that Donation, (r) was afterwards bury'd, and not in the Field of *Machpelah*, the common *Repository* of most of his Ancestors. And, to resolve the Difficulty of his Saying, that he took it from the Amorite by Force of Arms, when it is manifest, that he bought it of *Hamor* the Hivite, for an hundred Pieces of Silver; we may observe, that the Persons, who are call'd *Hivites* in one Place, may, without any Impropriety, be call'd *Amorites* in another, for as much as the *Amorites*, being the chief of all the seven Nations in *Canaan*, might give Donomination to all the rest, in like Manner, as all the People of the *United Provinces* are, from the Pre-eminence of *that one*, commonly call'd *Hollanders*: And then, if we can but suppose, that, after *Jacob's* Departure from *Shechem*, for fear of the neighbouring Nations, some straggling *Amorites* came, and seiz'd on the Lands, which he had purchas'd, and that he was forc'd to have recourse to Arms, to expel the Invaders, and maintain his Right, all the Difficulty, or seeming Repugnance, of the Passage, vanishes.

(s) *JACOB*, we allow, was a Man of Peace, but his Sons were Warriors; and to them he might the rather give Permission, to recover the Possession of what he had bought, because he look'd upon it, as an Earnest of his Posterity's future Possession of the whole Land. (t) And tho' we read nothing, in the foregoing History, either of the *Amorites* invading *Jacob's* Property, or of his expelling them thence; yet

(o) Patrick's Commentary, in Loc.  
xxiv. 32.

(p) Josh. xxiv. 32.

(q) Gen. xlviii. 22.

(r) Pool's Annotations.

(s) Chap. xxxiii. 19. compar'd with Josh.

(t) Patrick's Commentary.



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yet this is far from being the only Instance of Things being said to be done in Scripture, (*u*) whose Circumstances of Time, Place, and Persons, we find no where recorded; and a much easier Supposition it is, than to make (as some have done) the *Sword and the Bow*, here mention'd, to signify the *Money*, wherewith he purchas'd this small Territory.

Jacob's Prophecies, or Blessings to his Sons vindicated.

JACOB is the first, that we read of, who particularly declar'd the future State of every one of his Sons, when he left the World; but it has been an antient Opinion, that the Souls of excellent Men, the nearer they approach to their Departure hence, the more *divine* they grew, had a clearer Prospect of Things to come, and (as (*x*) *Xenophon* makes *Cyrus* speak) *at the Point of Death, became prophetick*. Though therefore the last Words, which we find our Patriarch uttering to his Sons, may be rather accounted *Prophecies*, than *Benedictions*; yet since the Text assures us, that (*y*) *he blessed every one with a separate Blessing*, we may fairly infer, that the three *eldest* though he found reason to rebuke very sharply, yet, if his Rebukes, and the Punishment pronounc'd against them, had the good Effect to bring them to a due Sense of their Transgressions, it was a Blessing to them, tho' not a *temporal one*; though, even in this last Sense, it cannot be said, but that he blessed *them* likewise, since he assign'd each of them a Lot, in the Inheritance of the promis'd Land, which it was in his Power to have depriv'd them of.

HOWEVER this be, (*z*) 'tis certain that all impartial Criticks have observ'd, that the Stile of these Blessings, or Prophecies (call them which we will) is much more *lofty*, than what we meet with in the other Parts of this Book; and therefore some have imagin'd, that *Jacob* did not deliver these very Words, but that *Moses* put the Sense of what he said into such *poetical* Expressions. But to me it seems more reasonable to think, that, the

Spirit of Prophecy, now coming upon the good old Patriarch, rais'd his Diction, as well as Sentiments; even as *Moses* himself is found to have deliver'd (*a*) his *Benedictions* in a Strain more sublime, than what occurs in his other Writings.

From Gen. xxxvii. to the End.

'Tis true, indeed, that, in the *Predictions* of the Patriarch, as well as in the *Benedictions* of *Moses*, several *Comparisons* do occur, which are taken from brute Animals. Thus *Judah* is compar'd to a *Lion*, *Issachar* to an *Ass*, *Dan* to a *Serpent*, *Benjamin* to a *Wolf*, and *Naphtali* to an *Hind let loose*: But this is so far from being a Disparagement to the *prophetick* Spirit, that it is a Commendation of it; since, if the *Lion* be a proper Emblem of *Power* and *Strength*; if the *Ass* be an Image of *Labour* and *Patience*; if the *Serpent*, an Hieroglyphick of *Guile* and *Subtilty*; if the *Wolf*, a Symbol of *Violence* and *Outrage*; and if an *Hind let loose* be no bad Representation of a People loving Liberty and Freedom; then were these *Qualities*, which nothing but a divine Spirit cou'd foresee, abundantly specify'd (as their respective Histories shew) in the Posterity of the several Heads of Tribes, to which they are applied.

AND, as these Comparisons are a Kind of Testimony of the divine Inspiration of the holy Patriarch upon this Occasion, so are they far from being any Diminution of the Dignity of the Subject, he was then treating of; since a Man must be a Stranger to all Compositions of this Kind, who is not persuaded, that *Comparisons*, taken from the *Animal-World*, are, as it were, the *Sinews* and Support of what we call the *Sublime*; and who finds not himself less inclin'd to cavil at *Jacob's* Manner of Expression, when he perceives the lofty *Homer* comparing his Heroes so frequently to a *Lion*, a *Wolf*, an *Ass*, a *Torrent*, or a *Tree*, according to the Circumstances he places them in, or the different Point of Light, wherein he thinks proper to take them. And I mention it as an Argument

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of

(*u*) To this Purpose, see Gen. xlviii. 22. Deut. ii. 9, 10, 11. Jos. xxiv. 11. xlix. 28.

(*z*) *Patrick's* Commentary.

(*a*) Deut. xxxiii.

(*x*) Lib. 8.

(*y*) Gen.



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of the Truth and Excellency of the *Mosick* History, that we find its Author adhering to the *original Simplicity*, and pursuing that very Method of Writing, which was certainly in Vogue, when the most antient Books, that we know any Thing of, were compos'd.

Why Joseph  
might be made  
Potiphar's  
Steward very  
soon.

M O S E S's Method of Writing (as we have had Occasion, more than once, to take notice) is very *succinct*; and therefore when he tells us, that, upon *Joseph's* coming into *Egypt*, and being sold to *Potiphar*, *Captain of the Guard*, he commenc'd Steward of his Household, we must not suppose, that there did not a sufficient Space of Time intervene to qualify him for that Office. What therefore some of the *Jewish* Doctors tell us, seems not improbable, *viz.* that his Master, as soon as he bought him, sent him to *School*, and had him instructed, not in the Language only, but in all the Learning of the *Egyptians*. However this be, 'tis certain, that there is no small Affinity between the *Hebrew* and *Egyptian* Tongue; so that a Person of good natural Parts, and of an Age the fittest that cou'd be for learning any Thing, might, with a little Diligence and Application, make himself Master of it, in a very short Time.

J O S E P H indeed, as we may observe, talk'd to his Brethren by an *Interpreter*; and that he might do, tho' the Difference between the two Tongues was not very great. (b) A *Frenchman*, we see, is not understood at first by an *Italian*, or *Spaniard*, tho' all the three Languages are deriv'd from the same Original; but, when once he is let into the Knowledge of this, and comes to perceive their different *Formations* and *Constructions*, what was *foreign* to him before, soon becomes *familiar*. And, in like Manner, *Joseph*, with a small Matter of Instruction, and some Observation of his own, might be let into the Secret of the *Egyptian* Language, the Nature of their *Accounts* and the Customs of the Country, and so become every

Way qualify'd to give the Content, we find he did, in the Place to which he was advanc'd. From Gen. xxxvii. to the End.

(c) T H E Notion, that we have of an *Eunuch*, is a Person, who has lost his *Virility*; and therefore to assign him a Wife (as we find *Potiphar* had a very naughty one) may seem a manifest Incongruity; but for this there is an easy Solution to be given. The Word *Saris* indeed denotes equally an *Eunuch*, and any *Court Minister*; and the Reason of this Ambiguity is, — That, as *Eastern Kings*, for their greater Security, were wont to have Slaves, who were *castrated*, to attend the Chambers of their Wives and Concubines, and, upon Proof of their Fidelity, did frequently advance them to the other *Court-Employments*, such as being *Privy-Councillors*, *High-Chamberlains*, *Captains of their Guards*, &c. it hence came to pass, that the Title of *Eunuch* was conferr'd on any, who were promoted to those Posts of Honour and Trust, even though they were not *emasculated*. And indeed, when we read, in the Book of *Kings* and *Chronicles*, so frequent Mention made of *Eunuchs* about the Person of *David*, and other *Jewish* Princes, we must be far from supposing, that these were all *Eunuchs* in Reality, since it was unlawful, (d) according to their *Historian*, in that Nation, to *castrate* even a domestic Animal; and, according to the Institution of their Law, an express Prohibition it was, that (e) he, who had his *privy Members cut off*, should not enter into the Congregation of the Lord.

B O T H the *Arabick* Version, and the Targum of *Onkelos*, are therefore very right, in rendering the Word, a *Prince*, or *Minister* of *Pharaoh*: For, if we compare the several Parts of his History, we shall find, (f) that *Potiphar* had the chief Command of the Forces, that guarded the Person and Palace-Royal; that, as such, he presided in all Courts, and Causes, that had a more immediate Relation to these; that he had Power, under the King, of

In what Sense  
Potiphar, tho'  
a married  
Man, is call'd  
an Eunuch.

(b) *Le Clerc's* Commentary, in Gen. xlii. 23. Antiq. l. 4. c. 3.

(c) Deut. xxiii. 1.

(d) *Heidegger's* Hist. Patriar. Vol. II. Exercit. 20.

(e) *Joseph.*

(f) *Bibliotheca Bibl.* on Gen. Vol. II. Occas. Annot. 39.



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of judging and deciding all Cases within those Walls, of imprisoning and releasing, of Life and Death, and of hastening or suspending the Execution of capital Punishments.

Why he did  
not immediately  
kill Joseph.

AND, if *Potiphar* was a Person invested with all this Authority, it may seem a little strange, why he did not immediately put *Joseph* to Death; since, had his Wife's Accusation been true, his Crime deserv'd no less a Punishment: But whether it was, that *Joseph* had found Means to vindicate himself, by the Mediation of the *Keeper of the Prison*, who was *Potiphar's* Deputy, tho' there is no Account of it in Scripture; or God, in Behalf of the *Righteous*, might interpose to mollify the Heart of this great Man, and restrain his Hand from doing Violence; the Issue of the Matter shews, that he was, in a short Time, convinc'd of his Innocence, or otherwise, it cannot be believ'd, that he wou'd have suffer'd him to be made so easy, and to be invested with so much Power, in the Prison; tho', at the same Time, he might not think proper to release him, for fear that so publick an Acquittal might bring Disreputation both to his Wife and himself.

Why Joseph  
might accept of  
Honours from  
Pharaoh.

*JOSEPH* cou'd not but foresee, that to live in the Palaces of Kings, and to accept of high Posts and Honours wou'd be very hazardous to his Virtue: (g) But, when he perceiv'd the Hand of Providence so visible in raising him, by Ways and Means so very extraordinary, to Eminence, and an Office wherein he wou'd have it in his Power to be beneficial to so very many, he could not refuse the Offers, which the King made him, without being rebellious to the Will and Destination of God. To him therefore, who had secur'd him hitherto, he might, in this Case, commit the Custody of his Innocence, and accept of the usual Ensigns of Honour, without incurring the Censure of Vanity or Ostentation.

And marry an  
Egyptian Wo-  
man.

AND, tho' in After-Ages, all Marriages with Infidels were certainly prohibited; yet there seems to be, at this Time, a

certain *Dispensation* current, for as much as *Judah*, to be sure, if not more of *Joseph's* Brethren, had done the same: Besides that, in *Joseph's* Case, there was something peculiar. (b) For, as he was in a strange Country, he had not an Opportunity of making his Addresses to any of the Daughters of the Seed of *Abraham*; as the Match was of the King's making, he was not at Liberty to decline it, without forfeiting his Pretensions to the Royal Favour, and consequently to the Means of doing so much Good; and, as it is not improbable, that he might be advis'd to it by a particular Revelation, so is it highly reasonable to believe, that he converted his Wife, at least, to the Worship of the true God, before he espous'd her: Even tho' there shou'd be nothing in that Opinion of the *Rabbins*, that he made a *Proselyte* likewise of her Father, the *Priest of On*, (who could not but be desirous to purchase, at any Rate, so advantageous an Alliance) and took this Occasion to establish the Rite of *Circumcision*, if not in all *Egypt*, at least among Persons of the *sacred* Order, who, (according to the Account of those, who wrote the History of that Country) in very early Days, certainly were not without it.

From Gen.  
xxxvii. to the  
End.

SOME may imagine, that, the better to personate an *Egyptian* Lord, and thereby conceal himself from his Brethren, or rather to comply with the Language of the Court in this Particular, *Joseph* swore by the Life of Pharaoh, in the same Manner, as the *Romans*, in Adulation to their Emperor, were wont to swear by his *Genius*. It must be acknowledg'd indeed, that, as every Oath is a solemn Appeal to God, to swear by any *Creature* whatever must needs be an impious and idolatrous Act; and therefore the proper Solution of this Matter is, — not that Oaths of this Kind were allowable before the Institution of *Christianity*, but that *Joseph*, in making use of these Words, did not swear at all. (i) For, since every Oath implies in it either an *Invocation* of some

That he was  
not accusom'd  
to swear.

Witness,

(g) *Heidegger's* Hist. Patriarch. Vol. II. Exer. 20.

(b) *Heidegger*, *ibid.*

(i) *Sanderfon's* Praelec. 5. §. 7.



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Witness, or a *Postulation* of some *Revenge*, (as our great *Sanderſon* terms it) to ſay that *Joſeph* appeal'd to the *Life* of *Pharaoh*, as a Witness, is ridiculous; and, without a very forc'd Conſtruction indeed, the Words can never be ſuppos'd to include in them a *Curſe*; and therefore their moſt eaſy Signification muſt be, what we call *indicative*: By the *Life* of *Pharaoh*, i. e. as ſure and certain as *Pharaoh* liveth, ye are *Spies*; juſt as we ſay, By the *Sun*, that ſhines, I ſpeak *Truth*, i. e. as ſure as the *Sun* ſhines; neither of which can, with any Propriety, be call'd *Oaths*, but only vehement *Aſſeverations*.

That he did  
not praſſe  
Divination,  
tho' he ſeems to  
pretend to it.

THE Words which *Joſeph's* Steward, ſent to apprehend his Brethren, makes uſe of, are, (k) *Is not this the Cup, in which my Lord drinketh, and whereby indeed he divineth*; and the Words, wherein *Joſeph* accuſts them, when they are brought before him, are, (l) *What Deed is this that ye have done? Wot ye not that ſuch a Man, as I, can certainly divine?* And from hence (m) ſome have imagin'd, that *Joſeph* was a Perſon addicted to magical Arts, and, by Virtue of this ſingle Cup, could diſcover ſtrange and wonderful Things. But, in Answer to this, others have obſerv'd, (n) that the Word *Nafbah*, which we render to *divine*, was formerly of an indefinite Senſe, and meant in general to *diſcover* or *make a Trial of*; and, accordingly, they have devis'd a double Acceptation of the Steward's Words, as if he ſhould ſay, — By this Cup (viz. left in a careleſs and negligent Manner)

my Maſter was minded to make an Experiment, whether you were Thieves, or honeſt Men; or ſay, — By this Cup, wherein he drinketh, my \* Maſter diſcovers and finds out the Temper and Diſpoſitions of Men, when they are in Liquor. But both of theſe Senſes ſeem a little too much forc'd, and are far from agreeing with the other Words of *Joſeph*.

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End.

It muſt be acknowledg'd therefore, that, as magical Arts of divers Kinds were in uſe among the *Egyptians*, many Years before *Joſeph's* Time of coming thither; and that, as *Joſeph*, by his wonderful Skill of interpreting Dreams, had gain'd a great Reputation for Knowledge, and; perhaps, among the Populace, might paſs for a *Diviner*; he took an Occaſion from hence, in order to carry on his Deſign, to aſſume a Character, that did not belong to him. There is no Reaſon however to infer from the Words, that \* the Art of *divining by the Cup*, (as it came afterwards to be praſtis'd) was then in uſe in *Egypt*; (o) becauſe the Words before us (according to the Senſe of the beſt Interpreters) do not relate to this Cup, as the *Instrument*, but as the *Subject* of Divination; not as the Thing, *with which*, but as the Thing, *concerning which* this magical Enquiry was to be made. And ſo the Senſe of the Steward's Words will be, “ How could you think, but “ that my Lord, who is ſo great a Man “ at *Divination*, would uſe the beſt of “ his Skill to find out the Perſons, who “ had robb'd him of the Cup, which he “ ſo

(k) Gen. xliv. 5.  
and *Patrick's* Commentary.

(l) Ver. 15.

(m) Vid. *Saurin's* Diſſertation 38.

(n) *Pool's* Annotations,

\* What may ſeem to give ſome ſmall Sanction to this Senſe, is that known Paſſage in *Horace*.

Reges dicuntur multis urgere cuculis,  
Et tentare mero, quem perpexiſſe laborant,  
An ſit amicitia dignus.

De Arte Poet.

\* *Julius Serenus* tells us, that the Method of *divining by the Cup*, among the *Aſſyrians*, *Chaldees*, and *Egyptians*, was, to fill it firſt with Water, then to throw it into thin Plates of Gold and Silver, together with ſome precious Stones, whereon were engraven certain Characters; and, after that, the Perſons, who came to conſult the Oracle, us'd certain Forms of *Incantation*, and ſo calling upon the *Dævil*, were wont to receive their Answers ſeveral Ways. Sometimes by *articulate Sounds*; ſometimes by the Characters, which were in the Cup, riſing upon the Surface of the Water, and, by their Arrangement, forming the Answer; and, many Times, by the viſible Appearing of the Perſons themſelves, about whom the Oracle was conſulted. *Cornelius Agrippa* [de occult. Philoſ. l. i. c. 57.] tells us likewiſe, that the Manner of ſome was, to pour melted Wax into the Cup, wherein was Water, which Wax would range itſelf in Order, and ſo form Answers, according to the Questions propos'd. *Saurin's* Diſſertation 38. and *Heidegger's* Hiſt. Patriar. Exercit. 20.

(o) *Heidegger's* Hiſt. Patriar. Vol. II. Exercit 20.



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“ so much prizes?” And this tallies exactly with the subsequent Words of *Joseph*, *Wot ye not that such a Man, as I, I, who have rais'd myself to this Eminence by my Interpretation of Dreams, and may therefore well be accounted an Adept in all other Sciences, should be long at a Loss to know, who the Persons were, that had taken away my Cup?*” This seems to be the natural Sense of the Words; the only one indeed, that they will fairly bear: (p) And tho' they do not imply, that *Joseph* was actually a *Magician*, yet they seem to justify the Notions of those Men, who think, that he carry'd his *Disimulation* to his Brethren so far, as to make them believe that he really had some Knowledge that Way.

Was not unkind to his Father, or Brethren.

THE *Royal Psalmist*, in his Description of the Sufferings of *Joseph*, (q) tells us, that he was not only sold to be a *Bond-servant*, but that *his Feet were hurt in the Stocks, and Iron entered into his Soul*, which signifies, at least, that he endur'd very hard Usage, before the Time came that his Cause was known, and his Innocence discover'd; and of all this his Brethren, when they sold him into Slavery, were properly the Occasions. So that, could we conceive, that any angry Resentments could harbour in a Breast, so fully satisfy'd of a divine Providence in all this Dispensation, we might have imagin'd, that *Joseph* took this Opportunity to *retaliate* the Injuries, which were formerly done to him; but this he did not. He desir'd indeed to be inform'd in the Circumstances of their Family, without asking any *direct* Question; and therefore he mentions his Suspicion of their being *Spies*, merely to *fish out* of them (as we call it) whether his *aged* Father, and his *younger* Brother were yet alive. For, upon their Return, we may perceive (especially considering that it is the *first* Minister of a mighty State, that speaks to a Company of poor indigent Shepherds) a wonderful Tenderness in his Expressions:

(r) *Is your Father well; the old Man, of whom ye spake, is he still alive?* besides the Instructions, which he plainly gave his Steward to bid them be of good Cheer. When he understood that his Father and Brother were both alive, and, as yet, had not Matters prepar'd for the Removal of his Father and Family, the Eagerness of his Affections may perhaps be thought to have carry'd him a little too far, in demanding his Brother to be brought to him; but we are not to doubt but that *Joseph*, by the divine Spirit, wherewith he was endow'd, did certainly foresee what would happen, (s) and that his Father's grieving a little Time for *Benjamin* wou'd be so far from endangering his Health, that it would only increase his Joy, when he saw him again, and dispose him the better for the Reception of the welcome News of his own Advancement in *Egypt*; which, had it come all upon him at once, and on a sudden, might have been enough to have bereav'd him of his Senses, if not of his Life itself, by a *Surfeit* of Joy.

UPON their second Dismission, after a very Kind Entertainment, it may be thought perhaps a Piece of Cruelty in *Joseph*, to have his Cup convey'd (of all others) into *Benjamin's* Sack, and thereupon to threaten to make him a *Bond-slave*, for a pretended *Felony*: But herein was *Joseph's* great Policy, and Nicety of Judgment. He himself had been severely treated by the rest, when he was young, and therefore was minded to make an Experiment, in what Manner they would now behave towards his Brother; whether they would forsake him in his Distress, and give him up to be a *Bond-slave*, as they had sold him for one; or whether they would stand by him in all Events, make Intercession for his Release, or adventure to share his Fate.

THIS, perhaps, may be thought his carrying the Matter a little too far: But, without this Conduct, *Joseph* cou'd not have known, whether his Brethren rightly

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deserv'd

(f) *Saurin's* Dissertations.

(g) *Psalm* cv. 17, 18.

(r) *Gen.* xliii. 7.

(s) *Universal History*, l. i. c. 7.

From *Gen.* xxxvii. to the End.



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deserv'd the Favour and Protection, which he might then design, and afterwards granted them. Without this Conduct, we had not had perhaps the most lively Images, that are to be met with in Scripture, of *injur'd Innocence*, of Meekness and Forbearance, and the *Triumphs* of a good Conscience, in him; and of the Fears and Terrors, the Convictions and *Self-condemnations* of *long conceal'd Guilt* in them. Without this Conduct, we had not had this lovely Portraiture of paternal Tenderneſs, as well as brotherly Affection; we had never had those solemn, ſad, and melting Words of *Jacob*, (t) *If I am bereav'd of my Children, I am bereav'd*, enough to pierce a tender Parent's Heart; or those others, (u) *Joseph is alive, I will see him before I die*, enough to raise it into Joy and Exultation again. In a Word, without this Conduct, we had never had that *courteous*, that *moving*, that *pleasingly mournful* Speech, wherein *Moses* makes *Judah address* Joseph, in Behalf of his poor Brother *Benjamin*, which exceeds all the Compositions of human Invention, and \* flows indeed from such *natural* Passions, as Art can never imitate. So that, upon a Review of his whole Conduct, *Joseph* is so far from deserving Blame, that all this seeming Rigour and Imperiousness of his, did *eventually* produce a great deal of Good; and was, in reality, no more, than the heightening the Distress, or thickening the *Plot* (as we call it in a Play) to make the *Discovery*, or future Felicity, he in-

tended his Family, more conspicuous and agreeable.

It must be acknowledg'd indeed, that *Moses* has done Justice to the History of *Joseph*; and employ'd most of the tender Passions of human Nature to give it a better Grace; but we must not therefore infer, either that he hath transcended Truth, or committed an Error, in recording the Quality of the Persons, employ'd to embalm his Father. What has led some into a great Mistake concerning the Origin of *Physick*, and that it was of no Vogue in the World until the Days of *Hippocrates*, was the great Superiority of Skill and Genius, which he demonstrated, both in his Practice and Writings. The Truth is, the *Divine old Man* (as (x) one expresses it) did so totally eclipse all, who went before him, that, as Posterity esteem'd his Works the *Canon*, so did it look upon him as the great *Father* of Medicine. But if we will credit the Testimony of (y) *Galen*, (who tho' a late Writer, was a very competent Judge) we shall find, that he was far from being the first of his Profession, even among the *Greeks*.

*HOMER* indeed, in his Poem of the *Trojan War*, seems to have cut out more Work for *Surgeons*, than *Physicians*; and therefore we find the chief of the *Faculty* only employ'd \* in healing Wounds, extracting Arrows, preparing Anodynes, and other such like external Operations; but, if we look into his other Work, which is of a more *pacifick* Strain, we shall soon discern

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That there  
was Plenty of  
Physicians in  
Egypt in the  
Time of Jo-  
seph.

(t) Gen. xliii. 14.

(u) Chap. xlv. 28.

\* The Observation of a learned Author upon the *Dialogue* between *Jacob* and his Sons, as well as the Speech of *Jacob*, is well worth our Notice, and serious Consideration. " Since such Passages are related by Men, who assert  
" no Art, and who liv'd long after the Parties, who first utter'd them, we cannot conceive, how all Particulars  
" could be so naturally and fully recorded, unless they had been suggested by his Spirit, who gives Mouth and Speech  
" to Man; who, being alike present to all Successions, is able to communicate the secret Thoughts of Forefathers  
" to their Children, and put the very Words of the Deceas'd (never register'd before) into the Mouths, or Pens of  
" their Successors, for many Generations after, and that, as exactly and distinctly, as if they had been caught, in  
" Characters of Steel or Brass, as they issu'd out of their Mouths: For it is plain, every Circumstance is here re-  
" lated, with such natural Specifications, (as he terms it) as if *Moses* had heard them talk; and therefore could not have  
" been thus represented to us, unless they had been written by his divine Direction, who knows all Things, as well  
" forepast, as present, or to come." Dr *Jackson* on the Creed, l. 1. c. 4.

(x) *Warburton's Divine Legation of Moses*, Vol. II. lib. 4.

(y) *Meth. Medic.* lib. 1.

\* Ἰατροὶς γὰρ ἀνὴρ πολλὰν ἀνδρείαν ἄλλων

ἔχει· τὴν ἐνδραμεὶν ἐπὶ τῇ ἡπείᾳ φάρμακα ποιεῖσιν.

*Iliad*. XI.



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discern the Use of internal Applications, when we find \* *Helen* brought in, as giving *Telemachus* a Preparation of Opium, which (as the Poet informs us) she had from *Pelydamna*, the Wife of *Thon*, an *Egyptian* Physician of great Note. And well might the Physicians of *Egypt* be held in great Esteem, “ when (as *Herodotus* “ relates the Matter) every distinct Distem- “ per had its proper Physician, who con- “ fin’d himself to the Study and Cure of “ that only; so that, one Sort having the “ Cure of the Eyes, another of the Head, “ another of the Teeth, another of the “ Belly, and another of occult Diseases, “ we need not wonder, that all Places “ were crowded with Men of this Profes- “ sion, or that the Physicians of *Joseph’s* “ Household shou’d be represented as a “ large Number.” True it is indeed, that these Physicians (and the very best of them) were employ’d in embalming the Dead; but then there was a wise Designation in this, viz. (z) not only to improve them in the Knowledge of *Anatomy*, but to enable them likewise to discover the Causes of such Disorders, as were a Baffle to their Art. And therefore, it was the Custom of the Kings of *Egypt*, (as *Pliny* informs us) to cause dead Bodies to be dissected, on purpose to find out the Origin and Nature of all Diseases. Thus it appears from the concurring Testimony of other Historians, that the Practice of Physick was a common Thing in *Egypt*, as early as the Days of *Joseph*; that the Multitude of its Professors makes it no strange Thing, his having a Number of them in his Family; and that the Nature of the Thing, as well as the Order of the State, oblig’d the very best of them to become *Dissecters*, and *Embalmers*.

Joseph's publick Management.

THIS may serve for a Vindication of what the Sacred *Historian* has related of

our *Patriarch* in his *private* Life, and we come now to consider him in his *publick* Capacity. As soon as he had foretold the King the long Famine, that was to befall *Egypt*, he gave him Advice to have the *fifth* Part of the Product of the Country laid up in Store against the ensuing Want. The *tenth* Part, (according to the Constitution of the Nation) belong’d to the King already, and to advise him to purchase as much more, for seven succeeding Years, was to consider him as the *publick Father* of his People, for whose Support and Welfare he was concern’d to provide. When himself was appointed to the Office of gathering in the Corn, he took care, no doubt, to have his *Granaries* in fortify’d Places, and, as the Scarceness increas’d, to have them secur’d by a Guard of the King’s Forces, to prevent Insurrections and Depredations. When he came to open his *Storehouses*, he sold to the Poor and to the Rich; and was it not highly reasonable that he, who bought the Corn, shou’d likewise sell it; or that the Money, which, by the King’s Commission and Order, had been laid out for such a Stock of Provisions against the approaching Necessities of his Subjects, shou’d return to the King’s Coffers again, to answer his Occasions? When their Money was gone, they brought him their Cattle; but this they did of their own Accord, without any Compulsion or Circumvention; and might he not as legally exchange Corn for Cattle, as he did it for Money before? His Corn he kept up perhaps at an high Rate; but had he sold it *cheap*, or given it *gratis*, the People, very likely, would have been profuse, and wanton in the Consumption of it; whereas his great Care and Concern was, to make it hold out the whole Time of the *Famine*. He oblig’d the Inhabitants of one City and District to remove, or make Room for those

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\* Τοῖα Διὸ θυγάτηρ ἔχε φάρμακα μέλιεντα  
Ἰουδα, τὰ οἱ Πολύδαμνα ὠρεν θῶντι παράνοισι  
Ἀιγυπτίῃ, τῇ πλεῖστα φέρει ζείδωρον ἄρουρα  
φάρμακα, πολλὰ μὲν ἰσθλὰ μεμιγμένα πολλὰ δὲ λυγρὰ  
Ἰουδοὺς δὲ ἑκάστος ἐπιδάμενθ’ ἀερεὶ σπέντων  
Ἀνθρῶπων —————      Odyss. Lib. iv.

(z) Warburton, ibid.



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those of another ; but this he might do, not so much to shew their Subjection to *Pharaoh*, as to secure the publick Peace, by disabling them, in this Way, from entering into any seditious Measures and Combinations.

It cannot be imagin'd indeed, but that in a Time of such general Want and Calamity, Men's Minds would be ripe for Rapine, Violence, and Mutiny ; and yet we meet with no one Commotion, during the whole Period of his *critical* Ministry, which bespeaks the Skill of the *Mariner*, when he is found able to *steer* steady in the Midst of so tumultuous a Sea. In fine, after he had a long while executed his high Trust, and the Years of Famine were come to a Conclusion, he gave the People back their Liberties and Estates, reserving to the King no more, than a double *Tenth* out of the Produce of their Lands, as a *Tribute* of their Vassalage ; which, considering the Richness of the Soil, and the little Pains requir'd in cultivating it, was an Imposition, far from being burthensome to the Subject, or vastly disproportionate to the Benefit they had receiv'd.

And favouring  
the Priests,  
vindicated.

THERE is but one Thing more, that I find objected to *Joseph* in this publick Station, (a) and that is, his Favour and Indulgence to the *Priests*, (and Priests that were *Idolaters*) in sparing their Lands, and laying no Tax upon them.

THE *Jewish* Doctors have a Tradition, that, when *Joseph* was in Prison, and his Master had bad Designs against him, it was by the Interest of the Priests, that he was set free, and that, consequently, in Gratitude, he could not do less, than indulge them with some particular Marks of his Favour, when he came into such a Compass of Power. But there is no Occasion for any such Fiction as this. (b) The Priests of *Egypt* were taken out of the chief Families of the Nation : They were Persons of the first Quality ; were

consulted upon all publick Affairs of Consequence ; and, upon a Vacancy, generally some One of them succeeded to the Crown. It was not likely therefore, that Persons of their high Rank and Station wanted *Joseph's* Assistance, to strengthen their Interest, for the obtaining of any *Immunities* ; nor is it apparent that they had it. On the contrary, it seems evident from the *Text*, that whatever peculiar Favours they were vouchsaf'd, proceeded all, not from *Joseph's* Good-will, but from the King's immediate Direction and Appointment : For *the Land of the Priests bought he not*, says *Moses* (*Ci chok le cohanim meeth Pharaoh*) because *Pharaoh* had made a Decree expressly against it, or, (in Analogy to our *Translation*) *because there was an Appointment for the Priests, even from Pharaoh ; and the Portion, which he gave them, they did eat, and therefore sold not their Lands.*

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WHY *Pharaoh*, when he thought fit to lessen the Property of his *common* Subjects, did not, at the same Time, attempt to reduce the exorbitant Riches of the Priests, we may, in some Measure, account for, if we consider, that, according to the Constitution of the Kingdom, the *Egyptian* Priests were oblig'd to provide all Sacrifices, and to bear all the Charges of the *national* Religion, which, in those Days, was not a little expensive ; so very *expensive*, that we find, in Countries where the Soil was not fruitful, and consequently the People poor, Men did not well know how to bear the Burden of Religion ; and therefore *Lycurgus*, when he reform'd the *Lacedemonian* State, instituted Sacrifices, the meanest and cheapest that he could think of. But *Egypt*, we know, was a rich and fertile Country, and therefore, in all Probability, the King and People being desirous that Religion should appear with a suitable Splendor, made Settlements upon the Priests from † the very first Institution of Government among

(a) Lord Shaftesbury's Characteristicks, Vol. III. Miscel. 3.

(b) Stuckford's Connection, Vol. II. 1. 7.

† It is the Opinion of some, that *Misraim*, the Founder of the *Egyptian* Monarchy, might, in Memory of some *Noachical* Tradition, set apart, at the very first, a Maintenance for the *Priesthood*, however degenerate and corrupt.



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among them, answerable to the Charges of their Function. Add to this, that the Priests of *Egypt* were the whole Body of the Nobility of the Land; that they were the King's Counsellors and Assistants, in all the Affairs which concern'd the Publick; (c) were joint Agents with him in some Things, and, in others, his Directors and Instructors. Add again, that they were the Professors and Cultivators of *Astronomy*, *Geometry*, and other useful Sciences; that they were the Keepers of the publick Registers, Memoirs, and Chronicles of the Kingdom; and, in a Word, that, under the King, they were the supreme Magistrates, and fill'd all prime Offices of Honour and Trust: And, considering them under these Views, we may possibly allow, that *Pharaoh* might think that they had not too much to support the Station they were to act in, and, for that Reason, order'd that no Tax shou'd be rais'd upon them.

The Testimony  
of Heathen  
Writers, con-  
cerning these  
Things.

THUS we have endeavour'd to clear the sacred History from all Imputations of Improbability or Absurdity, as well as *Joseph's* Conduct, both private and publick, from all unjust Censure, during this Period of Time; and may now produce the Testimony of several Heathen Writers, in Confirmation of sundry Particulars related herein.

THAT the Memory of *Joseph*, and of the wonderful Benefits he did, during the Time of his Administration, was preserv'd among the *Egyptians*, under the Worship of *Apis*, *Scrapis*, and *Osiris*; that the *Egyptian* Manner of interpreting Dreams was taken from what occurs in his History; and that the *Charistia* (mention'd by (d) *Valerius* and (e) *Ovid*) viz. Festival Entertainments, either for confirming Friendship, or renewing it, when bro-

ken, were Transcripts of the Feast, which *Joseph* made for his Brethren, is the general Opinion of such learned Men, as have made the deepest Enquiry into these Matters.

THAT the Patriarch *Jacob* went down with his whole Family into *Egypt*, where he found his Son *Joseph* in great Power and Prosperity, is reported by several Pagan Writers, who are cited (f) by *Eusebius*. That the *Egyptians*, (according to what *Moses* tells of them) had an unaccountable Antipathy to Shepherds, especially Foreigners, is related (g) by *Herodotus*. That the Priests in that Country enjoy'd several high Privileges, and were exempted from paying all Taxes and publick Imposts, is every where apparent (h) from *Diodorus*: And, that *Joseph* was just such a Person, as *Moses* has represented him, the Testimony (i) of *Justin* (with which we conclude the Patriarch's Story) is enough to convince us. *Joseph*, the youngest of his Brethren, says he, had a Superiority of Genius, which made them fear him, and sell him to foreign Merchants, who carry'd him into *Egypt*, where he practis'd the Magick Art with such Success, as render'd him very dear to the King. He had a great Sagacity in the Explanation of Prodigies, and Dreams; nor was there any Thing so abstruse, either in divine or human Knowledge, that he did not readily attain. He foretold a great Dearth, several Years before it happen'd, and prevented a Famine's falling upon *Egypt*, by advising the King to publish a Decree, requiring the People to make Provision for divers Years. His Knowledge, in short, was so great, that the *Egyptians* listen'd to the Prophecies coming from his Mouth, as if they had proceeded, not from Man, but from God himself.

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Be this as it will, 'tis certain, that, in Process of Time, their Allotment increas'd to such a Degree, that they became Possessors of one third Part of the whole Land, according to *Diodorus*, l. 1.

(c) *Diodorus Siculus*, l. 1. (d) *Lib. ii. c. 1.* (e) *De Fast. 1. 2.* (f) *Prepar. Evang. 1. 9.*  
(g) *Lib. ii. c. 47.* (h) *Lib. i.* (i) *Lib. xxxvi. c. 2.*



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## DISSERTATION IV.

### Of the Person and Book of J O B.

The Person and  
Book of Job  
real.

THAT *Job* was a real Person, and not a *fictitious* Character, and his Story Matter of Fact, and not a *parabolical* Representation, \* is manifest from all those Places, in Scripture, where Mention is made of him: And therefore, when, in the *Old Testament*, we find *Job* put in Company with *Noah*; and *Daniel*, and equally distinguish'd for his *Righteousness*, as, in the *New*, he is commended for his *Patience*; we cannot well suppose, that the Spirit of God, in both these Places, intended to delude us with a *Phantom*, instead of presenting us with a *real* Man.

WHETHER we allow that the Book of *Job* is of *divine Revelation*, or not, we cannot but perceive, that it has in it all the *Lineaments* of a *real History*; since the Name, the Quality, the Country of the Man, the Number of his Children, the Bulk of his Substance, and the Pedigree of his Friends, together with the Names and Situations of several Regions, can give us the Idea of no-

thing else: Tho' it must not be dissembled, that, in the *Introduction* more especially, there is an *allegorical Turn* given to some Matters, which (as they relate to *spiritual* Beings) would not otherwise so easily affect the Imagination of the Vulgar.

(k) *J O B*, according to the fairest Probability, was, in a direct Line, \* descended from *Abraham* by his Wife *Keturah*: For, by *Keturah* the Patriarch had several Sons, whom he, being resolv'd to reserve the chief Patrimony entire for *Isaac*, portion'd out (as we call it) and sent them into the *East* to seek their Fortunes, so that most of them settled in *Arabia*; and for this Reason perhaps it is, that the Author of his History records of *Job*, that, before his Calamities came upon him, (l) *he was the greatest of all the Men of the East*.

His Family.

THE Character, which God himself gives of *Abraham* is this. — (m) *I know him, that he will command his Children, and his Household after him, and that they shall keep the Way of the Lord, to do Justice*

\* Nay, upon the Supposition that the whole Book were a Dramatic Composition, this wou'd not invalidate the Proofs, which we have from Scripture of the real Existence of this holy Patriarch, or the Truth of his exemplary Story. On the contrary, it much confirms them; seeing it was the general Practice of Dramatic Writers, of the serious Kind, to chuse any illustrious Character, and well known Story, in order to give the Piece its due Dignity and Efficacy: And yet, (what is very surprizing) the Writers on both sides, as well those, who hold the Book of *Job* to be *Dramatical*, as those, who hold it to be *Historical*, have fallen into this *Paralogism*, that, if *Dramatical*, then the Person, and History of *Job*, is *fictitious*: Which nothing, but their Inattention to the Nature of a Dramatic Work, and to the Practice of Dramatic Writers, cou'd have occasion'd. *Warburton's Divine Legation*, Vol. III. Lib. vi.

(k) *Spanheim's History of Job*, c. 5.

\* At the End of the *Greek*, the *Arabick*, and *Vulgate* Versions of *Job*, we have this Account of his Genealogy, which is said to have been taken from the antient *Syriack*. *Job dwelt in Aulitis, upon the Confines of Idumæa, and Arabia. His Name at first was Jabab. He marry'd an Arabian Woman, by whom he had a Son, call'd Ennon. For his Part, he was the Son of Zerah, of the Posterity of Esau, and a Native of Bozrah; so that he was the fifth from Abraham. He reign'd in Edom, and the Kings before him reign'd in this Order: ————— Balak, the Son of Beor, in the City of Dinhabah; and, after him, Job, otherwise call'd Jobab. Job was succeeded by Husliam, Prince of Teman; after him reign'd Hadad, the Son of Bedad, who defeated the Medianites in the Fields of Moab. Job's Friends, who came to visit him, were Eliphaz, of the Posterity of Esau, King of Teman; Bildad, King of the Shuhites; and Zophar, King of the Naamathites. According to this Account, Job must be contemporary with Moses, and the three Friends, who came to see him, must be Kings. But the learned Spanheim, who has examin'd this Matter to the Bottom, finds Reason to think, that Job was a distinct Person from Jobab; was sprung from Abraham by his Wife Keturah; and liv'd several Years before the Time of Moses. *Cabnet's Dictionary*, on the Word *Job*, and *Spanheim's* Life of him.*

(l) *Job* i. 3.

(m) *Gen.* xviii. 19.



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*Justice and Judgment*; which may well afford another Argument for *Job's* being descended from the House of *Abraham*, since we find dispersed, every where in his Speeches, (n) such noble Sentiments of Creation and Providence, of the Nature of Angels, and the Fall of Man, of Punishments for Sin, and Justification by Grace, of a Redemption, Resurrection, and final Judgment; Notions which he could never have struck out from the *Light of Nature*, but must have had them originally from the Institution of his Parents, as they successively deriv'd them from the first *Father of the Faithful*, who had them immediately from God. But (what is an undoubted Matter of Fact) by his Wife *Keturah*, (o) *Abraham* had a Son, whose Name was *Shuah*, and therefore when we read of (p) *Bildad the Shubite*, we may well suppose, that he was a Descendant from that Family; who, living in the Neighbourhood perhaps, might think himself oblig'd, by the Ties of *Consanguinity*, to go, and visit his Kinsman, in such sad Circumstances of Distress.

His Country.

IN what Part of the World the Land of *Uz* lay, various Opinions have been started, according to the several Families, from whence *Job* is made to descend: But, upon Supposition, that he sprung from one of *Keturah's* Sons, his Habitation is most properly plac'd in that Part of *Arabia Deserta*, which has, to the North, *Mesopotamia*, and the River *Euphrates*; to the West, *Syria*, *Palestine*, and *Idumæa*; and, to the South, the Mountains of the *Happy Arabia*. And this Description receives some farther Confirmation from the Mention, which the History makes of the *Chaldeans*, and *Sabæans* plundering his Estate, who were certainly Inhabitants in these Parts.

When he liv'd.

IN what Age of the World this great Exemplar of Suffering liv'd, the Difference of Opinions is not small, even tho' there be some *Criteria* to direct our Judgment in this Matter. (q) That *Job* liv'd

in the World much earlier, than has been imagin'd, is, in some Measure evident from his mentioning, with Abhorrence, that antient Kind of *Idolatry*, the Adoration of the Sun and Moon, and yet passing by in Silence the *Egyptian Bondage*, which, upon one Occasion or other, could have hardly escap'd the Notice, either of him, or his Friends, had it not been subsequent to their Times. That he liv'd in the Days of the *Patriarchs* therefore is very probable, from the long Duration of his Life, which, continuing an hundred and forty Years after his Restoration; could hardly be less in all than two hundred; a longer Period than either *Abraham* or *Isaac* reach'd. That he liv'd before the *Law* may be gather'd from his making not so much as one Allusion to it, through the whole Course of his Life, and from his offering, (even with God's Order and Acceptance) such Sacrifices in his own Country, as were not allowable, after the Promulgation of the *Law*, to be offer'd in any other Place, but that, (r) which the Lord had chose in one of the Tribes of *Israel*; and that he liv'd after *Jacob* may be inferr'd from the Character given him by God, viz. that for *Uprightness*, and the Fear of God, there was none like unto him upon the Earth, which large Commendation could not be allow'd to any, whilst *Jacob*, God's favourite Servant, was alive; nor can we suppose it proper to be given to any, even while *Joseph* liv'd, who, in moral Virtues, and other Excellencies, made as bright a Figure, as any in his Time. Thus may the Computation be reduc'd to a very narrow Compass; and tho' it be extremely difficult to point out the precise Time, yet the general Opinion is, that he liv'd in the Time of the Children of *Israel's* Bondage, and therefore his Birth is plac'd in the very same Year, wherein *Jacob* went down into *Egypt*, and the Beginning of his Trial in the Year, when *Joseph* died; (s) tho' it might probably be less

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(n) Spanheim's History of Job, c. 10.

(o) Gen. xxv. 2.

(p) Job ii. 11.

(q) Spanheim, c. 3.

(r) Deut. xii. 13, 14.

(s) Howell's History of the Bible.



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liable to Exception, if his Birth were set a little lower, much about the Time of *Jacob's* Death; and then *Joseph*, who surviv'd his Father about four and fifty Years, will be dead about sixteen Years, at which Time *Job* might justly deserve the extraordinary Character, which God gave him, and have no Man then alive, in Virtue and Integrity, able to compare with him.

His former  
Greatness, and  
subsequent  
Sufferings.

How considerable a Figure *Job* made in the World, both in *temporal* and *spiritual* Blessings, the Vastness of his Stock (which was the Wealth of that Age) consisting of seven thousand Sheep, three thousand Camels, five hundred Yokes of Oxen, and five hundred She-Ases; the Largeness of his Family, consisting of seven Sons, and three Daughters; and the Excellency of the Character, which God was pleas'd to give him, together with the Greatness of his Sentiments, and the Firmness and Constancy of his Mind in all he suffer'd, are a sufficient Demonstration: And yet we see, that, as soon as God submitted him to the Assaults of his *spiritual* Enemy, what a sad *Catastrophe* did befall him. The *Sabæans* ran away with his Ases; the *Chaldeans* plunder'd him of his Camels; a Fire from Heaven consum'd his Sheep and Servants; a Wind overwhelm'd all his Children; and, while the Sense of these Losses lay heavy upon his Spirits, his Body was smitten with a fore Disease, in so much that he, who, but a few Hours before, was the greatest Man in the Country, in whose Presence the young Men were afraid to appear, and before whom the Aged stood up, to whom Princes paid the most awful Reverence, and whom Nobles, in humble Silence, admir'd; divested of all Honour, sits mourning on a Bed of Ashes, and, instead of royal Appa-

rel, has (t) his Flesh cloathed (as himself expresses it) with Worms and Clods of Earth, and is all over-spread with Sores and Ulcers.

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ACCORDING to the Symptoms, which *Job* gives us of himself, his Distemper seems to have been a *Leprosy*, but a Leprosy of a more malignant Kind, (as it always is in hot Countries) than our Climate (blessed be God) is acquainted with; and those, who would have it to be a Malady of a more opprobrious Name, lose all the Sting of the *Sarcasm*, when they are told, that this Distemper, be it what it will, was not of *Job's* Contraction, but of *Satan's* Infliction, not the Effect or Consequence of his Vice, but the Means appointed for the Trial of his Virtue.

What his Distemper was.

THEIR Opinion however seems to be well founded, who make this Distemper of *Job* not one simple Malady, but a Complication of many. For since the great Enemy of Mankind, saving his Life, had a full Licence to try his Patience to the uttermost, it is not to be question'd, but that he play'd all his Batteries upon him: And, accordingly, we may observe, that, (u) besides the *Blanes* pustulated to afflict his Body, the Devil not only instigated his Wife † to grieve his Mind, but disturb'd his Imagination likewise to terrify his Conscience. For, when the holy Man complains, (x) *Thou scarest me with Dreams, and terrifiest me with Visions*, the Analogy of the History will not suffer us to interpret, that God himself did inject these affrightening Dreams, but that the Devil (to whose Temptations he had submitted him) did raise gloomy Thoughts, and frame horrid and ghastly Objects in his Imagination, thereby to urge him to Melancholy and Despair.

How

(t) Job vii. 5.

(u) Young's Sermons, Vol. II.

† Some of the Jewish Doctors imagine, that *Dinah*, the Daughter of *Leah*, was this Wife of *Job's*, but this seems to be a mere Fiction. The Moroseness, and Impiety of the Woman, as well as the Place of her Habitation, do no Ways suit with *Jacob's* Daughter: And therefore the more probable Opinion is, that his Wife was an Arabian by Birth, and that, tho' the Words which we render, *curse* God and *die*, may equally bear a quite contrary Signification, yet are they not here to be taken in the most favourable Sense, because they drew from her meek and patient Husband to severe an Imprecation, *Thou speakest as one of the foolish Women speaketh. What? shall we receive Good at the Hand of God, and shall we not receive Evil?* Job ii. 10. Spenser's History of Job, c. 6.

(x) Job vii. 14.



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How long it  
continues'd.

How long this Load of various Calamity lay upon him, is no where mention'd in Scripture; and therefore since it is submitted to Conjecture, they, who, (to magnify the Sufferings) prolong the Duration of them to a Year, and (as some do) to *seven*, (y) seem to be regardless of the *tender Mercies* of the Lord; especially when there are some Circumstances in the Story, which certainly do countenance a much shorter Time. The News of the Misfortunes, which attended his *Goods* and *Family*, came close upon the Heels of one another, and we cannot suppose a long Space before he was afflicted in his Body. † His three Friends seem to have been his near Neighbours; and they came to visit him, as soon as they heard of the ill *News*, which usually flies apace. When they saw his Misery, seven Days they sat with him in Silence: After this, they enter'd into a Discourse with him, and at the End of this Discourse (which could not well last above another Week) God heal'd his Sores; before his Friends (who, being Men of Eminence in their Country, may be suppos'd to have Business at home, as soon as this melancholy Occasion was over) were parted from him. Now since all this may be included in the Space of a Month, and a Month may be thought Time enough for God to have made Trial of his faithful Servant; when once such Trial was made, we have reason to believe, that he would withdraw his heavy Hand, because his Character in Scripture is, that (z) *he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the Children of Men*.

Of the Contents of the Book of Job.

THE unaccountable Greatness of *Job's* Calamities had led his Friends into a Misconception of him, and made them surmise, that it must be the vindictive Hand of God, either for some deep *Hypocrisy*, or

some secret *Enormity*, that fell so heavy upon him: And therefore *Eliphaz*, in three Orations, *Bildad* in as many, and *Zophar*, in two, argue, from common Topicks, that such Afflictions, as his, could come from no Hand, but God's, and that it was inconsistent with his infinite Justice, to afflict without a Cause, or punish without Guilt; and thereupon charging *Job* with being either a grievous Sinner, or a great Hypocrite, they endeavour, by all Means, to extort a Confession from him. But *Job*, conscious of his Sincerity to God, and Innocence to Man, confidently maintains his Integrity; and, in Speeches return'd to every one of theirs, refutes their wicked Suggestions, and reproves their Injustice and Want of Charity; but always observes a submissive Stile and Reverence, when he comes to speak of God, of whose secret End, in permitting this Trial to come upon him, being ignorant, he often begs a Release from Life, lest the Continuance of his Afflictions should drive him into *Impatience*.

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xxxvii. to the  
End.

DURING these Arguments between *Job* and his Friends, there was present a young Man, nam'd *Elihu*, who, having heard the Debates on both Sides, and disliking both their Censoriousness, and *Job's* Justification of himself, undertakes to convince them both, by Arguments drawn from God's unlimited *Sovereignty*, and unsearchable *Wisdom*, that it was not inconsistent with his Justice, to lay his Afflictions upon the best and most righteous of the Sons of Men; and that therefore, when any such Thing came upon them, their Duty was to bear it without murmuring, and to acknowledge the divine Goodness in every Dispensation.

WHEN every one had spoken what he thought proper, and there was now a general

(y) *Bedford's Scripture Chronology*, l. 3. c. 4.

† *Eliphaz*, the *Temanite*, was the Grandson of *Esau*, and Son of *Teman*, who dwelt in a City of the same Name in *Idumaea*, not far from the Confines of *Arabia Deserta*. *Bildad*, the *Shubite*, was descended from *Shuah*, the Son of *Abraham* and *Keturah*. 'Tis almost impossible to find out who *Zophar* the *Naamathite* was, tho' some will have him descended from *Esau*; but as for *Elihu*, who comes in afterwards, he was the Grandson of *Buz*, the Son of *Nabor*; liv'd in the Southern Parts of *Mesopotamia*; and, upon the Supposition of *Job's* being sprung from *Abraham*, was his distant Relation. *Spanheim's Life of Job*, c. 11.

(z) *Iam.* iii. 33.



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neral Silence in the Company, the Lord himself took up the Matter, and, out of a *Whirlwind*, directed his Speech to *Job*; wherein, with the highest Amplifications, describing his Omnipotence in the Formation and Disposition of the Works of the *Creation*, he so effectually convinc'd him of his *Inability* to understand the *Ways* and *Designs* of God, that, with the profoundest Humility, he breaks out into this Confession and Acknowledgement: Behold, (a) *I am vile, what shall I answer thee? I will lay my Hand upon my Mouth. Once have I spoken, but I will not answer; yea twice, but I will proceed no farther.* This Acknowledgment pleas'd God so well, that he declar'd himself in Favour of *Job* against his injurious Friends, and hereupon putting an End to his Sufferings, \* cur'd him of all his Grievances, and rewarded his Faith and Piety with a Portion of *earthly* Felicity, double to what he had before, and with the Prolongation of his Life, beyond the common Extent of those Times.

Its Character.

THIS is a brief *Analysis* of the Book of *Job*: And, whoever looks into it with a little more Attention, will soon perceive, that the Author of it (whoever he was) (b) has put in Practice all the Beauties of his Art, to make the four *Persons*, whom he brings upon the *Stage*, keep up each his proper Character, and maintain the Opinions, which they were engag'd to de-

fend; will soon perceive, that for its Loftiness of *Stile*, and Sublimeness of *Thoughts*, for its Liveliness and Energy of *Expression*, for the Variety of its *Characters*, the Fineness of its *Descriptions*, and the Grandeur of its *Imagery*, there is hardly such another *Composition* to be found in all the Records of *Antiquity*, which has rais'd the Curiosity of all Ages to find out the Person, who might possibly be the *Author* of it.

From Gen.  
xxxvii. to the  
End.

SOME have imagin'd, that, as it has been no uncommon Thing, in all Ages, for Persons of Distinction to write their own *Memoirs*, *Job* himself, or some of his Friends at least, who bore a Part in the *Series* of this History, might set about the inditing it, if not for any other Reason, at last in Compliance to his Request, (c) *O, that my Words were now written, that they were printed in a Book!* But tho' some *Family Records* may possibly be kept of Events so remarkable as those, that occur in *Job's* Life, † yet the *poetical* Turn, which is given to the *latter Part* of the Book more especially, seems to favour of a more *modern* Composition, than suits with the *Æra*, wherein we suppose *Job* to have liv'd.

When, and by  
whom written.

OTHERS therefore suppose, that the Story of *Job* was at first a plain *Narrative*, written in the *Arabian* Tongue, but that *Solomon*, or some other *poetical* *Genius* like him, gave it a *dramatic* Cast, and,

(a) Job xi. 4, 5.

\* The *Eastern* People have a Tradition, that, upon God's proposing to make no farther Trial of *Job*, the Angel *Gabriel* descended from Heaven, took him by the Hand, rais'd him from the Place where he was, struck the Ground with his Foot, and caus'd a Fountain of the purest Water to spring out of it, wherein *Job* having wash'd his Body, and drank a Cup or two of it, found himself perfectly cur'd and restor'd to Health again. *Calmel's* Dictionary, under the Word *Job*.

(b) Universal History, l. 1. c. 7.

(c) Job xix. 23.

† St *Jerom*, in his *Preface* to the Book of *Job*, informs us, that the Verse, (in which it is chiefly compos'd) is *hebraick*. From the Beginning of the Book, to the third Chapter, he says, it is *Prose*; but from *Job's* Words, *Let the Day perish, wherein I was born, &c.* Chap. iii. 3. unto these Words, *Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in Dust and Ashes*, Chap. xlii. 6. the Verses are *Hexameter*, consisting of *Dactyls* and *Spondees*, like the *Greek* Verses of *Homer*, and the *Latin* of *Virgil*. *Marianus Victorius*, in his Note upon this Passage of St *Jerom*, says, that he has examin'd the Book of *Job*, and finds St *Jerom's* Observation to be true. Only we must observe, that the several Sentences, directing us to the several Speakers, (such as these, *Moreover the Lord answer'd Job, and said*, Chap. xl. 1. *Elihu also proceeded, and said*, Chap. xxxvi. 1. *Elihu spake moreover and said*, Chap. xxxv. 1, &c.) are in *Prose*, and not in *Verse*. St *Jerom* makes this farther Remark, that the Verses in the Book of *Job* do not always consist of *Dactyls* and *Spondees*, but that other Feet do frequently occur instead of them; that we often meet in them a Word of four Syllables, instead of a *Dactyl* and *Spondee*; and that the Measure of the Verses frequently differs in the Number of the Syllables of the several Feet; but allowing two short Syllables to be equal to one long one, the Sums of the Measure of the Verses are always the same. *Shuckford's* Connection, Vol. II. l. 9.



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and, in order to make the Subject more moving, introduc'd a Set of *Persons* speaking *alternately*, and always in *Character*.

But tho' this was certainly the Mode of Writing then in Vogue, yet how there came so much of the *Arabian* and *Syrian Dialect* to creep into a Book, that was compos'd at a Time, when the *Hebrew Tongue* was in its very Height of Perfection, we cannot conceive; nor can we be perswaded, but that, in reading the whole, we taste an Antiquity superior to that of *David* or *Solomon's* Time. And yet, this notwithstanding, (*d*) some have endeavour'd to bring down the Author of the Book of *Job* to the Times of the *Babylonish* Captivity, and suppose the Book to have been written for the Consolation of the Captives in Distress. But, if we suppose it written for the Sake of the *Jews*, is it not strange, that, in a Discourse of such a Kind, there should not be one single Word of the Law of *Moses*, nor so much as one distant Allusion to any Rite or Ceremony of it, or to any of the Form of Idolatry, for which the *Jews* suffer'd in the Time of their Captivity? The *Jews*, I say, certainly suffer'd for their Iniquity; but the Example of *Job* is the Example of an innocent Man, suffering for no Demerit of his own. Now apply this to the *Jews* in their Captivity, and the Book contradicts all the Prophets before, and at the Time of their Captivity, and seems to be calculated, as it were, to harden the *Jews* in their Sufferings, and to reproach the Providence of God for bringing them upon them. Without troubling ourselves therefore to examine, whether the Conjectures of those, (*e*) who carry the Date of this Book even lower than the Captivity, and impute it (*f*) to *Ezra*, that ready Scribe in the Law of *Moses*, as he is stil'd, have any good Foundation to support them, we may sit down contented with what is the common, and, as far as I can see, as proba-

ble an Opinion as any, viz. That (*g*) *Moses* (as soon as God put it in his Heart to visit his People) either while he continu'd in *Egypt*, or while he liv'd in Exile in *Midian*, either translated this Book from *Arabick* (in which some suppose it was originally) or wrote it entirely by a divine Inspiration, for the Support and Consolation of his Country-men, the *Jews*, groaning under the Pressure of the *Egyptian* Bondage; that, by a proper Example, he might represent the Design of Providence in afflicting them, and, at the same Time, give them Assurance of a Release and Restoration in due Time.

THIS is what most of the *Jews*, and several *Christian* Writers have affirm'd, and believ'd, concerning the Book of *Job*:

But the Author from whom I have compil'd a great Part of this *Dissertation*, has, by several Arguments, hardly surmountable, gone a great Way to destroy the receiv'd Opinion, and left nothing to depend on but this, — That the Writer of this Book was a *Jew*, and assisted therein by the Spirit of God; that it has always been esteem'd of canonical Authority; is fraught with excellent Instructions; and, above all, is singularly adapted to administer Comfort in the Day of Adversity. Not to quit therefore this Subject, without an Exhortation to this Purpose, (*h*) *Ye have heard of the Patience of Job, says the Apostle, and have seen the End of the Lord*: And therefore, (*i*) when we find our Spirits begin to flag under the Sense of any Affliction, or bodily Pain; when our Patience begins to be tir'd with Sufferings, which are greater than we can bear, and our Trust in God to be shaken, because he pours down his Judgments upon us; let us enliven our fainting Courage, by setting before us such noble Patterns as this; and let us be asham'd to sink under our Burthens, in their Weight far disproportionate to those, which a Man, made of the

From Gen. xxxvii. to the End.

A practical Inference from Job's Example.

(*d*) Bishop *Sherlock's* Use and Intent of Prophecy, Dissertation II. lib. vi. & Sentimens de quelques Theol. de Hol. p. 183, &c.  
of *Job*, c. 13.

(*h*) James v. 11.

(*i*) Bishop *Smalridge's* Sermon of Trust in God.

(*e*) *Warburton's* Divine Legation, Vol. III.

(*f*) *Ezra* vii. 6.

(*g*) *Spanheim's* Life



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the same Flesh and Blood, as we are, and supported by no other Helps, than are afforded us, without murmuring against God, without lessening his Confidence in

him, without impeaching his Justice, and without desponding of his Goodness, both patiently endur'd, and triumphantly overcame.

From Gen.  
xxxvii. to the  
End.

## CHAP. V.

*The Sufferings of the Israelites, and the Means of their Deliverance out of Egypt.*

### The HISTORY.

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A Revolution  
in Egypt occa-  
sions the Op-  
pression of the  
Israelites.

NOT long after the Death of Joseph, there happen'd a Revolution in Egypt, and a new King, who had no Knowledge of the great Services, which Joseph had done the Crown, perceiving the vast Increase of the Israelites, began to fear, that, in case of an Invasion, they possibly might side with the Enemy, and depose him; and therefore he call'd a Council,

wherein it was resolv'd, not only to \* impose heavy Taxes upon the People, but to confine them likewise to the hard Labour of bearing Burthens, and digging Clay, and making Bricks, and † building strong Cities for the King; thereby to impoverish their Spirits, as well as wear out, and infeeble their Bodies.

From Exod.  
i. to Chap.  
xiii.

THIS

\* The original Words, *Sare Massim*, which we translate *Task-masters*, do properly signify *Tax-gatherers*, and the Burthens are afterwards mention'd, as distinct Things, under another Name: So that the Resolution in Council was, both to lay heavy Tributes upon them, to impoverish, and heavy Burthens, to weaken them. Philo, in his Life of Moses, tells us, that they were made to carry Burthens above their Strength, and to work Night and Day; that they were forc'd, at the same Time, to be Workers and Servers both; that they were employ'd in Brick-making, Digging, and Building; and that if any of them dropp'd down dead under their Burthens, they were not suffer'd to be buried. Josephus, in his *Jewish Antiquities*, [l. 2. c. 9.] tells us, in like Manner, that they were compell'd to learn several laborious Trades, to build Walls round Cities, to dig Trenches and Ditches, to drain Rivers into Channels, and cast up Dikes and Banks to prevent Inundations. And not only so, but that they were likewise put upon the Erection of fantastical Pyramids, which were vast Piles of Building, rais'd by the Kings of Egypt, in Testimony of their Splendor and Magnificence, and to be the Repositories of their Bodies, when dead. Thus, by three several Ways the Egyptians endeavour'd to bring the Israelites under: By exacting a Tribute of them, to lessen their Wealth; by laying heavy Burthens upon them, to weaken their Bodies; and by preventing, by this Means, as they imagin'd, their generating and increasing.

† The two Cities here mention'd, viz. *Pithon* and *Raamses*, are said, in our Translation, to be *Treasure-Cities*, but not Places, where the King reposit his Riches, but rather his Grain or Corn; for such Repositories seem to have been much in use among the Egyptians, ever since the first Introduction of them by Joseph. Considering however the Name and Situation of these two Cities, that *Pithon*, according to Sir John Marsham, was the same with *Pelusium*, the most antient fortify'd Place in Egypt, call'd by Ezekiel, Chap. xxx. 15. *the Strength of Egypt*, and by Suidas, long after him, *Κλεις τῆς Αἰγύπτου*, *the Key of Egypt*, as being the Inlet from Syria; and that *Raamses*, in all Probability, was a Frontier-town, which lay in the Entrance of Egypt from Arabia, or some of the neighbouring Countries; it seems hardly consistent with good Policy to have Granaries, or Store-Cities in any other, than the inland Parts of a Country: And therefore, as these were situated in the Out Parts of Egypt, 'tis much more likely, that they were fortify'd Places, surrounded with Walls, and Towers, and deep Ditches, which wou'd cost the Hebrews an infinite deal of Labour in building, than that they were Repositories, either for Corn, or Treasure. Patrick's Commentary, and Well's Geography of the Old Testament, Vol. II.



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THIS Resolution of Council was soon put in Execution, and Task-masters accordingly set over the People, who should keep them to Drudgery, and use them with Cruelty, and do all they could, in short, to make their Lives miserable, but such was the Goodness of God to them, that the more they were oppress'd, the † more they multiplied; insomuch, that the King, finding that this Expedient would not do, sent for two of the most eminent of their Midwives, whose Names were *Shiphrah* and *Puah*, and gave them strict Charge, that, whenever they were call'd to do their Office to any *Hebrew* Woman, they shou'd privately strangle the Child, \* if it was a *Male*, and leave only the † *Females*

alive. But they, abhorring such a cruel and impious Practice, had no Regard to the King's Command, but sav'd Male and Female alike; and when the King sent for them, and reprimanded them for their Disobedience, they had this Answer in Readiness; — † That the *Hebrew* Women, being of a much stronger Constitution than the *Egyptian*, were generally deliver'd before they came.

THIS was a Piece of Service not unacceptable to God, but to *Pharaoh* it seem'd no more than a mere Evasion; and therefore, resolving upon a more effectual Method to extirpate the *Hebrews*, he publish'd an *Edict*, wherein he commanded all their *Male* Children to be thrown into the

From Exod.  
i. to Chap.  
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† Commentators observe, that, in this Passage of Scripture, where *Moses* describes the vast Increase of the *Israelites*, he employs a great Variety of Words, in expressing it; and, because the Words, he makes use of, are *six* in all, some of the *Hebrew* Expositors have thence concluded, that the Women brought forth six Children at a Birth. *Aristotle* indeed, in his *History of Animals*, (l. 7. c. 4.) tells us, that the Country of *Egypt*, where the *Hebrew* Women bred so plentifully, was so strangely *prolifick*, that some of their Women, at four Times, brought *twenty* Children: But, without having recourse to such prodigious Births, as happen'd but seldom, we need but suppose, that the *Israelites*, both Men and Women, were very fruitful; that they began soon, and continu'd long in begetting; and then there will be no Impossibility for 70 Males, in the Compass of 215 Years, to have multiply'd to the Number specify'd, even at the Rate of one Child every Year. For, according to *Simler's* Computation, 70 Persons, if they beget a Child every Year, will, in 30 Years Time, have above 2000 Children; of which, admit that one third Part only did come to *procreate*, in 30 Years more, they will amount to 9000. The third Part of them will, in 30 Years more, be multiply'd to 45,000; and, according to this Calculation, in 210 Years, the whole Amount will be at least, 2,760,000. So that, if there was any Thing miraculous, or extraordinary in all this, it was, that they shou'd be able to multiply at that Rate, notwithstanding their hard Labour, and cruel Bondage. *Patrick's* Commentary, and *Universal History*, l. 1. c. 7.

\* *Josephus* tells us, that there was a certain *Scribe* (as they call'd him) a Man of great Credit for his Predictions, who told the King, that there was a *Hebrew* Child to be born about that Time, who wou'd be a Scourge to the *Egyptians*, and advance the Glory of his own Nation, and, if he liv'd to grow up, wou'd be a Man eminent for Virtue and Courage, and make his Name famous to Posterity; and that, by the Counsel and Infligation of this *Scribe* it was, that *Pharaoh* gave the Midwives Orders to put all the *Hebrew* Male Children to Death. *Jewish Antiquities*, l. 2. c. 9.

† For this Distinction in his Barbarity the King might have several Reasons. As, 1. To have destroy'd the Females with the Males had been an unnecessary Provocation and Cruelty, because there was no Fear of the *Women's* joining to the King's Enemies, and fighting against him. 2. The Daughters of *Israel* exceeded very much their own Women in Beauty, and all Advantages of Person; and therefore their Project might be, to have them preserv'd for the Gratification of their Lust. *Philo* tells us, that they were preserv'd to be marry'd to the Slaves of the *Egyptian* Lords and Gentry, that the Children descended from them might be Slaves even by Birth. But suppose they were marry'd to Freemen, they cou'd have no Children, but such as wou'd be half *Egyptians*, and in Time be wholly ingrafted into that Nation. But 3. Admitting they marry'd not at all, yet as the Female Sex, among the *Hebrews*, made a very considerable Figure in *Egypt* for their Sense and Knowledge, the Care of their Families, and Application to Business, and for their Skill and Dexterity in many Accomplishments, that were much to be valu'd for the Use and Ornament of Life, such as the Distaff and the Loom, Dying, Painting, Embroidering, &c. such Women as these wou'd make excellent Servants and Domesticks for the *Egyptian* Ladies, who had no Relish of spending their Time any other Way, than in Idleness and Pleasure. *Bibliotheca Bibl. in Locum*.

† It is generally suppos'd that the Midwives, upon this Occasion, told a Lye; but there is no Reason for such a Supposition, tho' possibly they might conceal some Part of the Truth, which is not unlawful, but highly commendable, when it is to preserve the Innocent; for many of the *Hebrew* Women might be such, as are here describ'd, tho' not every one of them. The Answer of the Midwives therefore is so far from being a sneaking Lye, to save their Lives, that it is a bold Confession of their Faith and Piety, to the Hazard of them, *viz.* that they saw so plain an Evidence of the wonderful Hand of God, in that extraordinary Vigour in the Travail of the Women, that, do what *Pharaoh* wou'd, they durst not, wou'd not, strive against it, because they wou'd not strive against God. *Lightfoot's* Sermon, on 2 Sam. xix. 29.



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1571, &c.

The Birth of  
Moses and his  
Education.

the *River* ; and that they might be more subject to the Inspection of his *Searchers*, \* he *built them Houses*, and oblig'd them to live in settled Habitations.

SOME Years before this Edict, *Amram*, who was of the House of *Levi*, had marry'd a Woman, nam'd † *Jochebed*, of the same Tribe, and by her had a Daughter, whose Name was *Miriam*, and, four Years after that, a Son, whom they call'd *Aaron* ; and, in the Time of this cruel *Persecution*, his Wife was again deliver'd of a fine, lovely Boy, whom she was very desirous to preserve. For three Months therefore she \*

kept him conceal'd ; but fearing at length a Discovery, she resolv'd to commit him to the Providence of God : And, accordingly having made a little Basket, or Boat of *Rushes*, she plaister'd it within and without with Bitumen or Pitch, to make it keep out the Water. Into *this* she put the poor Infant ; and, leaving it among the Flags, by the Bank of the River, she plac'd his Sister, at a proper Distance, to observe the Event.

As good Luck wou'd have it, *Pharaoh's* Daughter, attended with her Maids of Honour, in a short Time after, came to the

From Exod.  
i. to Chap.  
xiii.

\* The making the *Midwives Houses*, is, by most Interpreters, ascrib'd to God, and the Thing is suppos'd to have been done in a metaphorical Sense, i. e. God gave them a numerous Offspring or Family, and a very lasting Succession or Posterity. For there are five Things, say they, which go to compleat the Greatness or Eminence of a Family, as such ; its Largeness, its Wealth, its Honours, its Power, and its Duration. And therefore, since the *Midwives* hazarded their own Lives to save those of the *Hebrew Children*, and to preserve the *Israelites* a numerous Progeny and Posterity, the God of *Israel*, in Return, not only made their own Lives long and prosperous, but gave them very numerous Families, and an enduring Posterity, in whom they might be said to live after Death, even from Generation to Generation. But all this is a very forc'd Construction, and what the original Words will by no Means bear. We shou'd therefore rather think, that these Houses were built not for the *Midwives*, but the *Israelites*, and that it was not God, but *Pharaoh*, who built them. The Case seems to be this : — *Pharaoh* had charg'd the *Midwives* to kill the Male Children, that were born of the *Hebrew Women* ; the *Midwives* fear'd God, and omitted to do what the King had commanded them, pretending, in Excuse for their Omission, that the *Hebrew Women* were generally deliver'd before they cou'd get to them. *Pharaoh* hereupon, resolving to prevent their Increase, gave Charge to his People to have all the Male Children of the *Hebrews* thrown into the River ; but his Command cou'd not be strictly executed, whilst the *Israelites* liv'd up and down in the Fields in Tents, which was their antient and customary Way of living ; for they wou'd shift here and there, and lodge the Women in Child-bed out of the Way, to save their Children. *Pharaoh* therefore built them Houses, and oblig'd them to a more settled Habitation ; that the People, whom he had set over them, might know where to find every Family, and to take an Account of all the Children, that shou'd be born. So that this was a very cunning Contrivance of *Pharaoh*, in order to have his Charge more strictly and effectually executed, than it cou'd otherwise have been done ; and was a Particular too remarkable not to be inserted in *Moses's* Account of this Affair. The only seeming Difficulty is, to reconcile the Words in the Text to what has been here advanc'd ; but this will be none at all, if the Words be rightly translated, and the Verses rightly distinguish'd, in this Manner. Exod. i. 20. And God dealt well with the *Midwives*, and the People multiplied, and waxed very mighty, and this happened (or was so, or came to pass) because the *Midwives* feared God. Ver. 21, 22. And *Pharaoh* built them (i. e. the *Israelites*) Houses, and charged all his People, saying, every Son, that is born, ye shall cast into the River, and every Daughter ye shall save alive. *Shuckford's* Connection, Vol. II. l. 7.

† *Jochebed* was not only of the same Tribe, but own Aunt likewise to *Amram*. For tho' the *Septuagint*, *Vulgate*, and (after them) many learned Expositors, both *Papists* and *Protestants*, have thought that she was no more than his Uncle *Kobath's* Daughter, and consequently his Cousin-german, because the Marriage of an Aunt was afterwards forbidden in the *Levitical Law* ; yet the plain Matter of Fact is repugnant to all this. In Exod. vi. 18. it is said expressly, that *Kobath*, the Father of *Amram*, was the Son of *Levi*. In Numb. xxvi. 59. it is said, that *Jochebed* was *Levi's* Daughter, and born in *Egypt* ; and here again in Exod. vi. 20. it is said, that *Amram* took him *Jochebed*, his Father's Sister, to Wife : And therefore, without subverting the natural Sense of these Texts, we cannot but conclude, that the Nephew marry'd his Aunt. For the Prohibitions, made upon the Degrees of Consanguinity, do not flow from the Law of Nature, but only oblige by Virtue of the Command of God ; and therefore, before this Command took Place, Relations of a nearer Affinity were allow'd to be join'd together. Nor can the suppos'd Difference of their Age be any Argument to the contrary, since *Levi* might have her, when he was an hundred Years old, and she consequently be very little, if any at all, older than her Nephew. *Saurin's* Dissertation 43.

\* *Josephus* tells us this Story — That *Amram*, finding his Wife with Child, and being solicitous about the King's Edict, pray'd earnestly to God to put an End to that dreadful Persecution ; and that God appear'd to him, and told him, that he wou'd in due Time free his People from it, and that the Son, who shortly wou'd be born unto him, shou'd prove the happy Instrument of their glorious Deliverance, and eternize his own Name thereby. — That this made him conceal him as long as he cou'd, but fearing a Discovery, he resolv'd to trust him to the Care of Providence, arguing in this Manner : — That if the Child cou'd be conceal'd (as it was very difficult to do it, and hazardous to attempt it) they must be in Danger every Moment, but, as to the Power and Veracity of God, he did not doubt of it, but was assur'd, that whatever he had promis'd he wou'd certainly make good ; and with this Trust and Persuasion he was resolv'd to expose him. *Jewish Antiquities*, l. 2. c. 9.



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2433, *Æc.*  
Ant. Christ.  
1571, *Æc.*

the River, to bathe herself; and spying the Basket at some Distance, she order'd one of the Company to go, and fetch it out; which when she had uncover'd, the surprizing Beauty of the Infant, weeping, and making its *little Moan*, so mov'd her Heart with Compassion, that she immediately declar'd her Intention to have it brought up, notwithstanding she perceiv'd it was certainly one of those Children, whom her Father, in his *Edict*, had order'd to be drown'd.

By this Time *Miriam*, the Child's Sister, had convey'd herself into the Company; and, † hearing the Princess enquire for a Nurse, offer'd her Service to go and fetch one out of the Neighbourhood;

which when she was order'd to do, she hasten'd to her Mother, who came with all Speed, and took the Child from the *Princess*, who promis'd to see her well paid for her Care in nursing it.

WHEN the Child was of an Age fit to be wean'd, his Mother carry'd him to Court, to shew him to the *Princess*; who \* soon grew so fond of him, that she adopted him for her own, and, in Remembrance of his being *taken out of the River*, gave him the † *Egyptian* Name of *Moses*. But his Father and Mother, † who brought him up in his Infancy, had taken Care to instruct him in such Things, as related to the Religion and History of his Ancestors; and therefore, when he arriv'd to Maturity, he

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† The Princess is call'd, by *Josephus*, *Thermuthis*; by *Artaphanes*, as he is cited by *Eusebius*, [Præp. l. 9. c. 4.] *Mercis*; and, in the *Alexandrian Chronicle*, *Myrrina*. But *Josephus* adds farther, that *Thermuthis* having sent for several wet Nurses, one after another, the Child turn'd its Head scornfully from their Breasts, and wou'd not suck: Whereupon *Miriam* told the Princess, that, if the Nurse and the Child were of different Nations, her Milk wou'd never agree with it, but that if an *Hebrew* Woman was fetch'd, he wou'd probably take the Breast from her; and that upon this, she was bid to go for one, and immediately brought her own, and the Child's Mother, whom he fell a sucking very greedily, to the Admiration of all the By-standers, lib. ii. cap. 9.

\* And well might the *Princess* be fond of the Child, who (according to *Josephus*) had Charms enough to engage any one's Affections. "For, as he grew up, he shew'd a Pregnancy of Understanding much above those of his Years, and did every Thing with such a Grace, as gave the World to understand, what they might in Time expect from him. After three Years of Age, he was such a Miracle of a Child for Beauty and Comeliness of Stature, that People wou'd stop, and stand gazing on him, with Delight and Admiration, wherever they saw him, and his Carriage and Behaviour was so very obliging, that he won upon the most morose and unfociable Sort of Men. *Thermuthis* herself (continues our Author) being as much delighted with him as any, wanting Issue of her own, and having resolv'd to adopt him for her Son, brought him one Day to her Father, and, in Merriment, told him, that she came to present him with a Successor, in Case he wanted one. The King receiv'd him with an affectionate Tendernefs, and, to gratify his Daughter, took off his Crown, and plac'd it upon the Child's Head; but so far was he from being pleas'd with it, that he threw it upon the Ground, and trampled upon it with his Feet. This Action was look'd upon as an ill Omen to the King and his Government, insomuch that the Scribe, we mention'd before, being then in the Company, cry'd out to have the Child kill'd: For, this is the Child, says he to the King, which I foretold your Majesty wou'd be the Destruction of Egypt, and he hath now confirm'd the Prophecy, by the Affront, he hath put upon your Government, in treading the Crown under his Feet. In short, this is he, by whose Death alone you may promise yourself to be secure. For, take him but out of the Way, the Hebrews shall have nothing more to hope for, and the Egyptians nothing more to fear. This Speech gave some Uneasiness to *Thermuthis*, and therefore she immediately took the Child away, without any Opposition from the King, whose Heart God had dispos'd not to take any Notice of what the Scribe had said." Lib. ii. ibid.

† Both *Philo*, *Josephus*, and *Clemens Alexandrinus*, will have the Word *Moses* to be deriv'd from the *Egyptian* *Mo*, which, according to them, signifies *Water*, and *Ises*, or *Yses*, which means *preserv'd*, as much as to say, *sav'd from the Waters*, or *preserv'd from drowning*. 'Tis very likely indeed, that the Princess shou'd give the Child a Name from no other Language, than her own; but then it is to be consider'd, that the *Hebrew* Word *Masbah* (from whence the Name naturally flows, and to which the Princess herself owns that she alludes) might have the same Signification in her Tongue, that it has in the *Hebrew*, where it always signifies a *drawing out of the Water*, 2 Sam. xxii. 17. Psal. xviii. 16. and Isa. xliii. 2. It cannot be doubted indeed, but that *Moses* had another Name given him by his own Parents at the Time of his *Circumcision*, but what that Name was, we have no Certainty, nor can we tell, from what Authority it is, that *Clemens* informs us, that it was *Joachim*. *Patrick's* Commentary.

† Besides the Education which his own Parents gave him, *Philo* acquaints us, that, from his *Egyptian* Masters, he was taught *Arithmetick*, *Geometry*, *Physick*, *Musick*, and *Hieroglyphicks*, otherwise call'd *enigmatical Philosophy*; that from the *Chaldeans* he learnt *Astronomy*; from the *Assyrians* their Character, or Manner of Writing; and from the *Grecians* all their liberal Arts and Sciences. But that was not a Time for the *Egyptians*, who excell'd the rest of the World in all Sorts of Learning, to send for Masters from *Greece*, which rather stood in need of *Egyptian* Teachers; for, to be learned in all the Wisdom of the *Egyptians* (as St *Stephen* asserts of *Moses*, Acts vii. 22.) was to have the best and most liberal Education, that the whole World cou'd at that Time afford.



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he left the Court, and, coming to live among his Brethren, was himself an *Eye-witness*, at what a merciless Rate the *Egyptian* Task-masters treated them.

The Occasion of  
his leaving E-  
gypt.

THIS rais'd his Resentment and Indignation to such a Degree, that, seeing, one Day, an *Egyptian* abuse an *Hebrew* in a very gross Manner, he stepp'd in to his Assistance, and, perceiving Nobody near, slew the *Egyptian*, and bury'd his Body in the Sand.

THE next Day, as he walk'd out again, he found two *Hebrews* in Contest with one another; whereupon he admonish'd them to consider that they were Brethren, and wou'd have decided the Quarrel between

them: But he, who was the Aggressor, rejected his Arbitration with Contempt, and upbraided him with the Murder of the *Egyptian* the Day before. This gave *Moses* some uneasy Apprehensions, that, as the Thing was now blown, it might not be long, before it reach'd *Pharaoh's* Ear, and endanger his Life; so that he thought it the † best Way to leave *Egypt*, and to secure himself by flying into the Country of *Midian*, beyond the *Red-Sea*.

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IN the Plains of *Midian*, there is a *Well* common to all the Natives of the Place: Here it was, that *Moses* had stopp'd to refresh himself, when seven of the Daughters of *Jethro*, † the chief Man of the Country,

His Retreat to  
Midian, and  
living with  
Jethro.

† *Josephus*, who has given us several Particulars of *Moses's* Life, which, in Modesty perhaps, he might not think proper to record of himself, has assign'd a farther Reason for his leaving *Egypt*, of which it may not be improper, in this Place, to give the Reader this short *Abstract*. “ When *Moses* was grown to Man's Estate, he had an Opportunity offer'd him of shewing his Courage and Conduct. The *Ethiopians*, who inhabited the upper Land on the South Side of *Egypt*, had made many dreadful Incursions, plunder'd and ravag'd all the neighbouring Parts of the Country, beat the *Egyptian* Army in a set Battle, and were become so elated with their Success, that they began to march towards the Capital of *Egypt*. In this Distress, the *Egyptians* had recourse to the Oracle, which answer'd, that they shou'd make choice of an *Hebrew* for their General. As none was more promising than *Moses*, the King desir'd his Daughter to consent, that he shou'd go, and head his Army; but she, after having first expostulated with her Father, how mean a Thing it was for the *Egyptians* to implore the Assistance of a Man, whose Death they had been plotting, wou'd not agree to it, until she had obtain'd a solemn Promise upon Oath, that no Practices or Attempts shou'd be made upon his Life. When *Moses*, by the Princess's Persuasion, had at last accepted the Commission, he made it his first Care to come up with the Enemy, before they were aware of him; and, to this Purpose, instead of marching up the *Nile*, as the Custom was before, he chose to cross the Country, tho' the Passage was very dangerous, by reason of the poisonous flying Serpents, which infested those Parts; but for this he had a new Expedient. The Bird *Ibis*, tho' very friendly to every other Creature, is a mortal Enemy to all Serpents; and therefore having got a sufficient Number of these, he carry'd them along with him in Cages, and, as soon as he came into any dangerous Places, he let them loose upon the Serpents, and, by their Means and Protection, proceeding without any Harm or Molestation, he enter'd the Enemies Country, took several of their Cities, and oblig'd them at last to retreat into *Saba*, the Metropolis of *Ethiopia*. *Moses* sat down before it: But, as it was situate in an Island, with strong Fortifications about it, in all Probability it wou'd have cost him a longer Time to carry it, had not *Tharbis*, the King of *Ethiopia's* Daughter, who had the Fortune once to see him from the Walls behaving himself with the utmost Gallantry, fallen in Love with him. Whereupon she sent privately to let him know, that the City shou'd be surrender'd to him, upon Condition, that he wou'd marry her immediately after. *Moses* agreed to the Proposal; and, having taken Possession of the Place, and of the Princess, return'd with his victorious Army to *Egypt*. Here, instead of reaping the Fruits of his great Achievements, the *Egyptians* accus'd him of Murder to the King, who, having already taken some Umbrage at his Valour and great Reputation, was resolv'd to rid himself of him: But *Moses*, having some Suspicion of it, made his Escape, and, not daring to go by the common Roads, for fear of being stopp'd by the King's Guards, was forc'd to pass through a great Desert to reach the Land of *Midian*.”

† The Word *Cohen* signifies indifferently either *Priest* or *Prince*, and accordingly, in these early Ages, both these Offices were frequently united in one and the same Person. It seems however, that *Jethro* was scarce a Prince in that Country, for then, one wou'd think, that the Shepherds wou'd not have dar'd to have been so insolent to his Daughters; and yet, if he was a *Priest*, it is made a Matter of some Contest between two famous *Rabbins* whether he was an *Idolator*, or a Worshipper of the true God. *Aben Ezra* is of Opinion, that as he was descended from *Midian*, the Son of *Abraham* by *Keturah*, in all Probability, he profess'd the true Religion; nor can he suppose that *Moses* wou'd have marry'd his Daughter, had he been bred up in a false one: Whereas *Moses*, 'tis plain, not only owns his Alliance with his Family, but, upon his Arrival in the Camp of *Israel*, invites him to offer Sacrifices to the Lord, (Exod. xviii. 11, 12.) as one, who ador'd the same God with the *Israelites*. *Kimbi* however, on the other Hand, affirms, that, at first, he was an idolatrous Priest, but afterwards, when he came to *Moses* in the Wilderness, and was particularly inform'd of all those great and wonderful Things, which God had wrought, in *Egypt*, for the Deliverance of the *Hebrews*, he became a Convert to the Worship of the true God; and, for this he produces a Passage in the same Chapter, Ver. 11. Now I know that the Lord is greater than all Gods; for, in the Thing wherein they



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Country, came to draw Water for their Flocks; but when they had fill'd their Troughs, a Parcel of rude Shepherds, being minded to serve their own Turn first, seiz'd on their Water, and frighten'd the Damfels away: Which *Moses* perceiving, went to their Assistance, and, forcing the Shepherds to retire, drew the young Virgins more Water, and gave it to their Flocks.

HEREUPON taking their Leaves they made haste home; and, while their Father was wondering at their speedy Return, they inform'd him how civil a certain Stranger had been, both in watering their Flocks, and protecting them from the Insults of the *Rusticks*; which made *Jethro* send, and invite him to his House, and treat him in a Manner suitable to the Civility he had shewn to his Daughters; insomuch that *Moses*, after he had tarry'd there some Time, was so pleas'd with his courteous Reception, that he express'd a Willingness to take up his Abode with him, † and become his *Shepherd*. This Proposal *Jethro* very readily embrac'd; and, to attach him the more to his Interest, gave him his † Daughter *Zipporah* in

Marriage, by whom he had two Sons, whereof the elder he nam'd *Gershom*, which signifies a *Stranger*, alluding to his own Condition in that Country; and the younger *Eliezer*, importing *God my Help*, in grateful Acknowledgment of God's having deliver'd him from the Hands of *Pharaoh*, who sought his Life.

WHILE *Moses* liv'd in the Family of *Jethro*, the King, who was upon the *Egyptian* Throne, when he left the Country, died; but his Successor, who was no less a Tyrant, and Oppressor of the *Israelites*, laid such heavy Burthens upon them, as made their Lives extremely miserable, till at length, their Complaints reach'd Heaven; and, as the Time of their Deliverance grew near, God, remembering the Covenant, which he had made with their Forefathers, began to look upon them with an Eye of Pity and Compassion.

Moses was to be his Instrument in bringing about their Deliverance: And therefore, while he was feeding his Father-in-law's Flock, and, as they wander'd in their feeding, follow'd them as far into the *Desert* as † Mount *Horeb*, he saw a Bush

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God's appearing to him in the burning Bush.

they dealt proudly, he was above them. But, besides this, there is a farther Difficulty in relation to this *Jethro*. In Exod. iii. 1. he is expressly call'd the *Father-in-law* of *Moses*, and yet the Father of the young Women, whom *Moses* defended at the Well, and whereof he certainly marry'd one, is said to be *Reuel*, Chap. ii. 18. and not *Jethro*: Either therefore this *Reuel* must be their Grandfather, who, being Head of the Family, might, in a larger Sense, be call'd *Father*, as we find Instances of the like Nature, in Gen. xxxi. 43. 2 Kings xiii. 14, &c. or (as others will have it) this *Reuel*, or *Jethro*, was one and the same Person under different Denominations. Upon Supposition therefore, that he was descended from the Family of *Cush*, it is imagin'd, that, while he continu'd in *Idumæa*, his Name might be *Reuel*, but, upon his Removal into *Midian*, to avoid the Wars and Tumults in his own Country, he came to be call'd *Jethro*, as being the only *Remainder* (for so the Word signifies) of the *Cushites* in that Country. *Bibliotheca Bibl.* and *Bedford's Scripture Chronology*, l. 3. c. 4.

† It can hardly be suppos'd, but that a Person of *Moses's* Education, wou'd, in the Space of 40 Years, which he abode in *Midian*, find some other Employment for himself, than keeping Sheep; and therefore some have imagin'd, that, in this Time, he wrote the Book of *Job* (as we mention'd before) to comfort the *Israelites*, by the Example of his admirable Patience, under their heavy Oppression in *Egypt*, and the Book of *Genesis* likewise, that they might the better understand what Promises had been made to their Ancestors, *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, and that the Time for their Accomplishment was approaching. Nor can we suppose, but that the several Arts and Sciences, which he had been taught in his Youth, he took Care, in this Place of happy Retirement, to cultivate and improve. *Patrick's Commentary*.

† It may be made a standing Observation, that *divine* Authors do not relate all the Passages of a Story, (as other Authors delight to do) but such only, as are most *material*. We may therefore suppose, that a great many Things interven'd between *Moses's* Entrance into *Jethro's* Family, and his Marriage to his Daughter; especially considering, that his Children were so young, at the Time of his Return into *Egypt*. The Observation of *Philo*, however, is not altogether to be neglected, viz. *That Men of a great Genius quickly shew themselves, and are not made known by Length of Time*: And therefore he thinks, "That *Jethro*, being first struck with Admiration of his goodly Aspect, and then "of his wife Discourse, immediately gave him the most beautiful of all his Daughters to be his Wife, not staying to "enquire of any Body, who he was, because his own most excellent Qualities sufficiently recommended him to his Affection." *De Vita Mosi*, l. 1.

† *Horeb* is a Mountain in *Arabia Petraea*, at so small a Distance from Mount *Sinai*, that they seem to be no more than two *Tops* belonging to the same Mountain. *Sinai* lies to the East, and *Horeb* to the West; but we find them frequently



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a Bush on Fire, and, as he thought, flaming for a considerable while, but (what occasion'd his Astonishment) not in the least damag'd or consum'd. This rais'd his Curiosity to go a little nearer, and see, if he cou'd discover the Cause of it; but, as he was approaching, † he heard a Voice out of the Bush, calling unto him, and ordering him to \* pull off his Shoes, because the *Ground*, whereon he stood, *was holy*. *Moses* obey'd; and while the Voice went on to declare itself the God, who had, all along, been kind to his Ancestors, and had now, with Compassion, seen the Afflictions of his Brethren, and

was come down to deliver them from their Oppressors, he fell down upon the Ground, and cover'd his Face with his Garment, as being unable to sustain the Refulgency of the *divine Presence*.

*M O S E S*, by this Time, had entirely laid aside all Thoughts of rescuing his Brethren, the *Israelites*, from their Thralldom; nor had he any Opinion of his own Abilities, if he should make the Attempt, to succeed in so difficult an Undertaking: And therefore, when God propos'd the Thing to him, and open'd the whole Manner and Method, in which he wou'd have it executed, he began to excuse himself, by

urging

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And encourag-  
ing him, tho'  
very reluc-  
tant, to under-  
take the Deli-  
verance of the  
Israelites.

frequently in Scripture us'd promiscuously. For, whereas the Author to the *Hebrews* several Times asserts, that God gave his Law to the *Israelites* at *Horeb*, tho' other Places expressly say, that it was at *Sinai*, this is easily agreed, by observing, that they both made but, as it were, one Mountain with two Tops, whereof that of *Sinai* is much the higher, tho' that of *Horeb* exceeds it in Fruitfulness and Pleasure. It is not for that Reason however, no nor yet for its vast Height, that it obtain'd the Title of the *Mount of God*. *Josephus* indeed tells us (l. 2. c. 12.) that the People of the Country had a Tradition, that God, in a more particular Manner, *dwelt there*, and that therefore, in Reverence to the Place, they always declin'd feeding their Flocks upon it: But the true Reason of its being so call'd is, that, in After-Ages, it became famous for sundry Events, and, at this Time, receiv'd its Name by way of *Anticipation*: For here it was, 1. That God appear'd to *Moses* in the Bush; 2. That he manifested his Glory at the Delivery of the Law; 3. That *Moses*, with his Rod, brought Water out of the Rock; 4. That, by lifting up his Hands, he made *Joshua* prevail against the *Amalekites*; 5. That here he fasted twice forty Days and forty Nights; 6. That from hence, he brought the two Tables of the Law; and 7. that here *Elijah* was vouchsaf'd a noble Vision; with some others of the like Nature. *Cabnet's Dictionary*, *Universal History*, l. 1. c. 7. and *Wells's Geography* of the Old Testament, Vol. II.

† In the Text it is said, that *the Angel of the Lord appear'd unto him in a Flame of Fire out of the midst of the Bush*, Exod. iii. 2. But whether it was a created Angel, speaking in the Person of God, or God himself, or (as the most receiv'd Opinion is) *Christ*, the Son of God, has been Matter of some Controversy among the Learned. Those, who suppose it no more than an Angel, seem to imply, that it would be a Diminution of the Majesty of God to appear upon every Occasion, especially when he has such a Number of *celestial Ministers*, who may do the Business as well. But considering, that God is present every where, the Notification of his Presence, by some outward Sign, in one determinate Place (which is all we mean by his *Appearance*) is, in our Conception, less laborious (if any Thing laborious cou'd be conceiv'd of God) than a Delegation of Angels, upon every turn, from Heaven, and seems, in the main, to *illustrate*, rather than *debase*, the Glory of his Nature and Existence. But however this be, 'tis plain, that the Angel, here spoken of, was no created Being, from the whole Context, and especially from his saying, *I am the Lord God, the Jehovah*, &c. since this is not the Language of *Angels*, who are always known to express themselves in such humble Terms, as these, *I am sent from God, I am thy Fellow-Servant*, &c. 'Tis a vain Pretence to say, that an Angel, as God's *Ambassador*, may speak in God's Name and Person; for what Ambassador of any Prince ever yet said, *I am the King*? Since therefore no Angel, without the Guilt of Blasphemy, cou'd assume these Titles; and since neither *God the Father*, nor the Holy Ghost, are ever call'd by the Name of an *Angel*, i. e. a *Messenger*, or Person sent, whereas God the Son is call'd by the Prophet *Malachi*, Chap. iii. 1. *the Angel of the Covenant*, it hence seems to follow, that this *Angel of the Lord* was God the Son, who might very properly be call'd an *Angel*, because, in the Fulness of Time, he was sent into the World, in our Flesh, as a Messenger from God, and might therefore make these his *temporary Apparitions*, Presages, and Forerunners, as it were, of his more solemn *Mission*. *Pool's Annotations*.

\* *Justin Martyr* (in his second Apology) is of Opinion, that the Custom of *putting off the Shoes*, both among the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, before they began to officiate in holy Things, took its Rise from this Precept given to *Moses*; but our learned Mr *Mede* seems to be of a different Opinion, viz. that *Moses* did not give the first Occasion to this Rite, but that it was deriv'd from the Patriarchs before him, and transmitted to future Ages from that ancient general Tradition. It is certain that *Pythagoras*, who took his *Institutes* chiefly from the *Egyptians*, delivers it as a Rule in his *Rubrick*; *Ὁσων ἅσθιν ἀνυπόδητοι, καὶ ποδοὶ ἐπὶ ἁγίοισιν ἐστίεναι*, i. e. *he, who sacrifices, should put off his Shoes, and so approach to the holy Ordinance*; and therefore God, in compliance to an ancient Custom, then in Practice among the *Egyptians*, might speak to *Moses*, who was a Person well acquainted with their Ceremonies, to *decalcate*, as very well knowing, that it wou'd be a Means to create in him a greater Reverence to the divine Presence, and a more awful Attention to what he was going to say. *Patrick's* and *Le Clerc's Commentaries*.



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urging his Meanness and Insufficiency to take upon him the Character of a divine Ambassador. This Difficulty God endeavour'd to remove, by assuring him, that he wou'd be with him, and assist him in every Step he took; that he wou'd enable him to accomplish the Thing, though never so perplex'd and arduous; and, for a Token of his Veracity herein, that, within a small Compass of Time, he shou'd see that very People, who now were in Slavery, set free, and worshipping him on that very Mountain.

Moses, still unwilling to undertake the Thing, desir'd to know what he was to say to the People, and by what Name he was to call the Person, who sent him upon this Message: To which Request, God was pleas'd to reply, — That he, who sent him, was an *eternal, independent, self-existent* Being, † the God of *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, by which Name he glory'd to be call'd; and therefore he requir'd him, first to assemble the *Elders of Israel* together, and acquaint them with his *Design*, and then to go directly to the King, and demand of him a Dismission of the *Israelites*, at least for three Days Jour-

ney into the Wilderness, in order to sacrifice to their God; which, though at the first he knew he wou'd be far from granting, yet, in the End, wou'd be glad to consent to, when he shou'd see the divine Power exerted upon sundry Occasions, and so many Miracles wrought before his Eyes, as wou'd compel him to let them go.

SUCH a solemn Assurance as this, from the Mouth of God himself, was enough, one wou'd think, to have gain'd a ready Compliance; but *Moses* still demurs to the Thing, and makes it an Objection, that the People, when he came to them, might possibly question his *Credentials*: And therefore, to obviate this, God promises to enable him to work Miracles for their Conviction. And, for a Specimen of this, when he bad him throw the Rod, that was in his Hand, upon the Ground, it instantly became a Serpent terrible to behold, but, when he order'd him to take it up, it resum'd its former Shape; when he put his Hand into his Bosom, \* upon pulling it out, it was all over *leprous*, but, upon putting it in, and pulling it out again, it became as *clean* as before; and, (as if this

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† God, no doubt, was the God of *Noah*, and of all the holy Patriarchs, who liv'd before *these three* were born; but for a peculiar Reason he is call'd their God, because of his Covenant, and the Promise made to each of them, that the *blest Seed* shou'd spring from their Loins, in Opposition to the Pretensions of other neighbouring People, who (as the learned Dr *Alix* observes) were their *Rivals* in that Hope. And so the Words will denote, as much as if he had said, the God of *Abraham*, and not of *Lot*, as the *Ammonites* and *Moabites* pretended; the God of *Isaac*, and not of *Ismael*, as his Posterity pretended; and the God of *Jacob*, and not of *Esau*, as the *Edomites* boasted. *Patrick's Commentary.*

\* It is no improbable Conjecture, that, as God commanded *Moses* to work all his Wonders before *Pharaoh*, this Miracle of the *Leprosy* gave occasion to the fabulous Story, which was invented in After-Ages, viz. That *Moses* was a Leper, and the *Israelites* a scabby Race, whom the *Egyptians* were forc'd to drive out of their Country, for fear of the Infection. This Defamation is first met with in *Manetho's Egyptian History*; from *Manetho* it descended to *Apion*, the *Greek Historian*; and from him *Justin* and *Tacitus*, two noted *Roman Authors*, undoubtedly took it. But, as *Manetho* might not, at first, maliciously devise it out of his own Head, so those Writers, from whom he compil'd his History, might derive it from this Passage of *Moses's* appearing with a leprous Hand before *Pharaoh*, which was presently nois'd about the Country, without the other Part of his being immediately cur'd. For (according to the Argument of *Josephus*) "there needs no other Proof of his being no Leper, than what arises from his own Words, viz. that no Lepers shou'd be admitted into any Towns or Villages, but live apart, in a distinct Habit, by themselves; that whoever touch'd a Leper, or lodg'd under the same Roof with him, shou'd be reputed unclean; and that whoever shou'd come to be cur'd of that Disease, shou'd pass through certain Purifications, wash himself with fountain-Water, shave off all his Hair, and offer such and such Sacrifices, before he shou'd be receiv'd into the holy City. Now, if *Moses*, says he, had been afflicted with this Distemper himself, 'tis incongruous to think, that he wou'd ever have been so severe upon others for it." The *Leprosy* indeed was a Distemper, in a Manner, peculiar to the *Egyptians*.

Est Elephas morbus, qui propter flumina Nil

Gignitur Aegypto in mediâ, neque præterea usquam.

as both *Lucretius* (l. 6.) and *Plutarch* tells us: And, if it was so in *Moses's* Time, he may be presum'd to have made Laws more strict against it, with an Intention to excite the People's Carefulness to avoid a Distemper, which they had already seen so much of, but had now (together with the other Calamities of their Bondage) happily escap'd. For that



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this were not enough) to gain him a further Credit among the People, he gave him a *standing Power* to convert *Water* into *Blood*, whenever there was Occasion.

BUT the Promise of all this miraculous Power would not prevail with *Moses* to accept of this Office. He alledg'd, in Excuse, his Want of Eloquence, and || the natural Impediment he had in his Speech. But this Defect likewise God promises to supply in an extraordinary Manner, and, as he was the great Author of human Nature, to give him all the Faculties, that were necessary for the Business, he put him upon. So that, driven from all his Subterfuges, *Moses* was at last compell'd to declare downright, that he had no Inclination to the Office, and therefore desir'd of God to let him alone, and find out some other, that was fitter for his Purpose.

So blunt a Refusal was not so pleasing to God, and might have been resented with Indignation; but, instead of that, he resum'd the Objection, and told *Moses*, that as to his Defect of Utterance, his Brother *Aaron* (who wou'd be fond of the Office, and was already set out from home to meet him) wou'd be sufficiently capable of supplying. To him therefore he bid him impart the whole Affair, and to make use of him as his *Orator*, but to reserve the chief Conduct of it to himself, and not to forget † to take along with him his Rod, wherewith he wou'd enable him to work all Miracles.

By these Persuasions, and Demonstrations of a miraculous Power to assist him, *Moses*, at last, was prevail'd on to accept the Commission, and, accordingly, went to his Father-in-law, and, † without tel-  
ling

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*Moses return-  
ing to Egypt,  
is met by his  
Brother  
Aaron.*

that the People, at this Time, were in good Health, is evident from the long Journey they undertook, and which, on all Hands is agreed they did perform: And that they were not expell'd by the *Egyptians*, but went away from them fore against their Will, their Pursuit of them to the *Red-Sea*, and losing all their Lives with a Purpose of retaking them (Facts that are attested by several *Heathen* Authors) are an abundant Demonstration. *Joseph. contra Apion. Plutarch's Quest. Nat. Bibliotheca Bibl. Vol. II. Exercit. 4. and Patrick's Commentary.*

|| *Moses* here tells us of himself, that he was *slow of Speech*, which most interpret to be a *Stammerer*, or *Stutterer*; and yet *St Stephen* (Acts vii. 22.) declares of him, that *he was mighty in Words, as well as Deeds*; but this admits of an easy Reconciliation, if we do but suppose, that the Sense of what he spake was great and weighty, though his Pronunciation was not answerable to it. As God however tells him, Exod. iv. 11. that he it was, who made the *Mouth*, and cou'd, consequently, give to any Man what Faculties he thought convenient, or remove any Impediment he might have, it seems not improbable, that, either by Use and Exercise, or else by God's immediate Cure of his Defect, *Moses* had acquir'd a better Facility in delivering his Mind, since we find him making several Speeches to the People, especially that excellent Discourse before his Death, in the Beginning of *Deuteronomy*; as he has likewise (where his Song occurs towards the latter End) given an ample Demonstration, that he wanted not *eloquent Words*, when he pleas'd to employ them. *Patrick's Commentary.*

† Wonderful are the Stories, which the *Hebrew* Doctors tell us of this *Rod*, viz. That it originally grew in *Paradise*, was brought away by *Adam*, from him pass'd to *Noah*, and so, through a Succession of Patriarchs, till it came to be transplanted into *Jethro's* Garden, and there took Root again, God knows how; that it was call'd *Zaphir*, (whence *Ziphorah* his Daughter had her Name) and had the *Tetragrammaton* written upon it; that, when *Ziphorah* fell in Love with *Moses*, her Father consented that she shou'd have him, if he cou'd pluck up this *Zaphir-Rod*, and, at the same Time, publish'd a Proclamation, that whoever did it first, shou'd marry his Daughter; that hereupon several lusty young Men came, and tried their Strength in vain, but that *Moses*, by being acquainted with the true Pronunciation of the Name of God, in Virtue thereof, did it with Ease, and so not only obtain'd his Daughter, but this Rod into the Bargain, with which he wrought afterwards, all his Wonders in *Egypt*. But how fictitious soever all this may be, 'tis certain, that in Exod. iv. 20. this Staff is call'd the *Rod of God*, and that partly, because it was appropriated to God's special Service, to be the Instrument of all his glorious Works; and, partly to shew, that whatever was done by that Rod, was not done by any Virtue in it, or in the Hand of *Moses*, but merely by the Power of God, who was pleas'd, for the greater Confusion of his Enemies, to use so mean an Instrument. Nor is it an improbable Conjecture, that the *Wands*, which great Ministers are wont to carry in their Hands, in Token of their Power and Office, were originally deriv'd from this of *Moses*. *Universal History, l. i. c. 7. and Pool's Annotations.*

† He was, both in Justice, and Decency, oblig'd to acquaint his *Father-in-law* with his Intention to leave *Midian*, and go into *Egypt*, because he had bound himself by an Oath to live with him, and was resolv'd now to take his Wife and Children, as being well assur'd of a speedy Return. But he thought fit to conceal from him the Errand, upon which God sent him, lest he shou'd endeavour to hinder, or discourage him from so difficult and dangerous an Enterprize. So that *Moses*, in this Instance, has given us a rare Example of *Piety* and *Prudence*, in that he took care to avoid all Occasions and Temptations to Disobedience to the divine Commands; as well as of a *singular Modesty* and

*Humility.*



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ling him the Occasion, requested Leave to go, and visit his Brethren, who were in *Egypt*. His Father-in-law readily consented to it ; so that taking his Wife and Children along with him, he was proceeding in his Journey, when (to his great Surprise) an Angel appear'd to him in the *Inn* where he lodg'd, and, with a stern Countenance, and flaming Sword in his Hand, threaten'd to kill him, because, by the Persuasions of his Wife, or his own Indulgence, he had neglected to circumcise his younger Son ; which, when his Wife perceiv'd, she immediately took a Knife, made of a sharp \* Flint, and therewith circumcising the Child, pronounc'd over him the usual Form of *Admission* into the Pale of the *Church* ; which, when she had done, the angry *Vision* disappear'd, and gave Signs, that God was pleas'd.

WHILE *Moses* was on his Way to *Egypt*, *Aaron*, by a divine Revelation, was inform'd thereof, and order'd to go, and meet him in the Wilderness. Not far from the Mount of *Horeb* they met : And, after mutual Embraces and Endearments, *Moses* began to open unto him the Purport of his *Commission*, the Instructions he had receiv'd from God, and the miraculous Works, he was empower'd to shew : And thus proceeding to *Egypt* the two Brothers call'd an Assembly of the chief *Elders* of the People, wherein *Aaron* declar'd to them the Message, which God had sent by *Moses*, while *Moses* (to confirm the Truth of his divine Mission) wrought the

several Miracles, which God had appointed him, before their Eyes ; insomuch that they were all fully convinc'd that he was a true Prophet, come from the God of their Fathers, who had, at length, commiserated their Afflictions, and sent now to deliver them from the Bondage : And, with this Persuasion, they kneel'd down upon their Knees, and worshipp'd God.

NOT many Days after, *Moses* and *Aaron* went to Court, and, having obtain'd Admission to the King, requested of him, that he wou'd give the *Israelites* Leave to go three Days Journey into the Wilderness, in order to perform a solemn Service to the Lord their God. But *Pharaoh* was so far from complying with their Request, that, knowing no Being superior to himself, he *profanely* question'd the Existence of their God ; or, if there was such a Thing, he cou'd not see why they might not serve him in *Egypt*, as well as elsewhere, and therefore he positively refus'd to let them go.

THE Truth is, he suspected that they had a Design of revolting from his Service, and had been laying *Schemes* to get out of his Dominions. This to him was an Argument, that they had too much Leisure ; and, an effectual Way to check their indulging themselves in such Contrivances, was to take care to leave them fewer vacant Hours ; and therefore he order'd greater Tasks, and more Work to be laid upon them. † He reprimanded *Moses* and *Aaron* for going among the People, and interrupting

*Humility*, in that such glorious and familiar Converse with God, and the high Commission, with which he had honour'd him, made him neither forget the Civility and Duty, which he ow'd to his Father, nor break out into any publick and vain-glorious *Oscentations* of such a Privilege. *Pool's Annotations.*

\* Whether it was requir'd, that the Instrument, made use of in the Circumcision of Children, was to be of *Stone* or *Flint*, and whether the *Hebrews* never us'd any other, is a Question very learnedly discuss'd by *Pererius*, in his Disputation on this Place. That the *Heathens* perform'd such Sort of Abscissions with sharp Flints or Stones, is evident from several Authors ; and though *Pererius* determines against the constant Use of the *Flint* among the *Hebrews* in Circumcision, and against its being prescrib'd, or injoin'd in the Institution, yet there is great Reason to presume, that this Operation was never done with any other Kind of Instrument, before that of *Joshua's* circumcising the *Israelites* in the Wilderness. *Bibliotheca Bibl. in Locum.*

† The Words of *Pharaoh* are, *Why do ye, Moses and Aaron, let the People from their Works? Get ye to your Burthens:* Which Words seem to be directed, not so much to the *Elders* of *Israel*, who might possibly go along with them, as to *Moses* and *Aaron* themselves ; and so the Sense of the Reproof will be, " So far am I from granting the Liberty, which you desire for the People, that, as a just Punishment upon you, for your seditious Attempt, I command you also to go with the rest, to take your Share in their Burthens, and to perform the Task, which shall be requir'd of you." And that so cruel a *Tyrant* did not proceed farther against them, must be ascrib'd to the mighty Power of God, who governs the Spirits, and restrains the Hands of the greatest Kings, when he pleases. This seems



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interrupting them in their Employments. He gave their Task-masters charge, not to allow them any more \* Straw, and yet to exact the same Tale of Bricks from them without Abatement.

THIS Charge, the Task-masters, who were *Egyptians*, communicated to their *Under Officers*, who were *Hebrews*: And, when the People (who being forc'd, for Want of Straw, to wander all the Country over to pick up Stubble) had not Time to make as many Bricks, as were exacted, these *Hebrew Officers* were call'd to an Account, and beaten. They, however, not well knowing from whence this unreasonable Severity proceeded, whether from the Royal Edict, or the Rigour of the Task-masters, address'd the King himself, and laid their Grievances before him in the most humble Manner. But so far were they from receiving any Redress, that the Answer return'd them was, " That the  
" King wou'd have his Edict executed,  
" be it never so severe ; and wou'd exact  
" from them their full Number of Bricks,  
" though he was resolv'd to allow them no  
" Straw."

THIS Answer was enough to run them to the utmost Despair: And therefore, as they return'd from the King, meeting *Moses* and *Aaron*, they discharg'd their Grief and Anger (though very unjustly) upon them; telling them, " That they  
" had taken care to infuse an Odium into  
" the King against them, and given him a  
" plausible Handle to destroy them, which  
" they wish'd in God might fall upon their own Heads." These bitter Expressions afflicted *Moses* to that Degree, that he expostulated the Matter with God, for suffering *Pharaoh* to be so exasperated against his People, and for having not in the least mitigated their Afflictions, since the Time, that he first went to him.

HIS Concern for the Oppression of his Brethren made him certainly forget the Promise, which God had given him, and the Perverseness of *Pharaoh*, which he had foretold him: But, notwithstanding this, God was pleas'd to give him fresh Assurances, that now the Time was come, wherein he wou'd manifest his Almighty Power, and exert the full Force of the  
|| Name, which he had taken upon himself,  
in

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The Murmur-  
ings of the Peo-  
ple, and Mo-  
ses's Uneasiness  
thereupon.

to be a better Account, than what some of the *Jewish Fictions* give us of it, viz. that when *Moses* and *Aaron* came into *Pharaoh's* Presence, they were rais'd to a taller Stature, than they had before; had a Splendor in their Countenances, like that of the Sun; and appear'd with such Majesty, as quite struck him with Terror and Astonishment. *Pool's Annotations*, and *Patrick's Commentary*.

\* What the Use of Straw was in making Bricks, is variously conjectur'd. Some think it was of no other Use, than to heat the *Kilns*, wherein they were burnt; others, who will have it that they were never burnt at all, imagine, that it serv'd only to cover them from the too intense Heat of the Sun, and that they might be bak'd gradually; but, as it is evident that they were burnt in *Kilns*, the most probable Opinion is, that Straw was mix'd with the Clay, to make them more solid: For, according to a Passage in *Lucilius*, mention'd by *Nonius Marcellus*, Straw was antiently employ'd to this Purpose.

Nam laterem qui ducit, habet nil amplius unquam,

Quam commune lutum è paleis, cœnumque aceratum. Sat. l. ix.

|| The Words of God, upon this Occasion, are, ——— *I appear'd unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the Name of EL-SHADDAI, the Almighty God; but, by my Name JEHOVAH was I not known to them*, Exod. vi. 3. But how can this be, when, long before *Moses's* Time, God is so frequently call'd by that Name? For, did not the Sons of *Seth* call themselves by the Name of *Jehovah*, Gen. iv. 26? Did not *Abraham* swear, and lift up his Hands to *Jehovah*, Gen. xiv. 22? Did not he call the Place, where he went to offer *Isaac*, *Jehovah-jireh*, Gen. xxii. 14? Did not the Lord say unto him, *I am the God Jehovah, that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees*, Gen. xv. 7? And when in a Vision, *Jacob* saw him stand before him, did not he say, *I am Jehovah, the God of Abraham, thy Father, and the God of Isaac*, Gen. xxviii. 13? These Passages make it impossible for God not to be known to the Patriarchs under that Name: And therefore several learned Writers upon this Text have deprehended a Fault in our Translation, and wou'd have the latter Part of the Verse to be taken interrogatively, thus, *By my Name Jehovah was I not known unto them?* If we take the Sentence interrogatively, say they, every one will see, that it plainly intimates, that the Lord had reveal'd himself unto them by his Name, which is agreeable to the Scripture Account of the Patriarchs Knowledge and Worship of him; but to take the Words without the Interrogation, and suppose them to intend, that the Lord, who appear'd to *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, was not known to them by his Name *Jehovah*, cannot be reconcil'd to some very express Passages in the Book of *Genesis*; unless we can suppose, that, as *Genesis* was not written, when God reveal'd this his Name to *Moses*, *Moses* makes use of it by way of Anticipation, because, at the Time when he wrote, the *Jews* commonly us'd it, tho' in the Days when the Patriarchs, whose Lives he was giving some Account of,



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in the Deliverance of his People from their Bondage, and in the Performance of their Promises made to their Forefathers, by giving them the Land, the rich and plentiful Land of *Canaan*, in Possession. With this God appointed *Moses* to acquaint the Children of *Israel*, and to promise them moreover, that he wou'd make them his peculiar People, and take them under his immediate Protection; so that, in the Event, they shou'd plainly see, that their Deliverance, and Admission to the Inheritance, he had spoken of, was effected by that God, who is always faithful to his Promises. But, tho' *Moses* fail'd not to carry these Tidings to the People, yet such was their Affliction

of Mind, upon the Increase of their Servitude, that they gave little or no Attention to him.

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GOD however, pursuing the Ends of his Providence, commanded *Moses* to go again to the King, and demand the Release of his People; and, when he endeavour'd to decline the Office, upon Pretence of the † Impediment in his Speech, which he might possibly think was the Reason why his own Countrymen did not hearken unto him; and how then cou'd he expect that *Pharaoh* shou'd do it, in a Matter so much to his Loss? God, to remove this Objection, told him, — † That there was no Occasion for himself to speak unto *Pharaoh*, seeing he

He is order'd again to apply to the King, and the Result of it.

of, liv'd, it was a Thing utterly unknown. There is another Way, however, of expounding these Words, if, by the Name *Jehovah*, we understand not the Letters or Syllables, but what is properly the Import of it, viz. not only God's eternal Existence, but his omnipotent Power likewise, and unchangeable Truth, which give Being (as we may say) to his Promises by the actual Performance of them. That this is the Sense of the Word *Jehovah*, is apparent from several Passages in this very Book of *Exodus*. Thus, Chap. vii. 5. *And the Egyptians shall know that I am Jehovah, when I stretch forth my Hand upon Egypt*; and again, Ver. 17. *Thou shalt know that I am Jehovah; for behold, I will strike with the Rod, that is in thine Hand, upon the Rivers, and they shall be turn'd into Blood*: So that the Meaning of the whole Passage will fairly be, — “ That, tho' God gave *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, such “ Demonstrations of his Power, as cou'd not but convince them, that he wou'd certainly perform his Promises; yet “ they did not live to see the Accomplishment of them, which he was now going to set before the *Israelites*. They “ believ'd in these Things, but they did not experimentally know them. They had Dreams and Visions indeed, but “ *Moses* was the first that wrought Miracles and Prodigies. By these he made the Name of the Lord known unto the “ World:” And therefore *Maimonides* well concludes from this Place, that the Prophetick Spirit of *Moses* was more excellent, than that which had been upon any before his Time. *Pool's* Annotations, *Le Clerc's* and *Patrick's* Commentaries, and *More Newcomb*. Part ii. Cap. 35.

† The Phrase in the Text is, *uncircumcis'd in Lips*; for as, among the *Jews*, Circumcision of any Part denoted its Perfection, so Uncircumcision was set to signify its Defectiveness, or Ineptitude to the Purposes, for which it was design'd. Thus the Prophet says of the *Jews*, that *their Ear was uncircumcis'd*, and adds the Explanation of it, because *they cannot hearken*, Jer. vi. 10. Again he tells us, that *the House of Israel were uncircumcis'd in the Heart*, i. e. wou'd not understand, and learn their Duty, Jer. ix. 26. And, in like Manner, here *uncircumcis'd Lips* must mean a Person that was a bad Speaker, and wanted Eloquence; and what might possibly induce *Moses* to make use of this Metaphor, rather than any other, might be the Consideration of his having so lately neglected to circumcise his Son. Some are of Opinion, that the Word Circumcision carries in it an Idea of something superfluous in the Part, and that therefore *Moses's* Tongue might be either too long, or too big for his Mouth, and that this might occasion either an Inelegance, or Hesitation in his Speech: But the more probable Opinion is, that he was what we call *Tongue-tied*, which his Parents, either in their Fright might not perceive, or, in the general Hurry and Destruction of the Children, might not dare to send for a proper Person to remedy, until it was too late. However this be, 'tis certain, that as Circumcision was the first and greatest Sacrament among the *Jews*, so Uncircumcision was esteem'd by them the greatest Scandal and Disgrace; and therefore *Moses* perhaps thought it some Disparagement to him, that he was not able himself to deliver his Mind, in an handsome Manner, to *Pharaoh*, and therefore made mention of this again, to engage the divine Majesty to circumcise his Lips (as they term it) i. e. to remove this Impediment in his Speech, as we have some Reason to believe that he did. *Pererius*, *Patrick's*, and *Le Clerc's* Commentaries.

† God, to silence the Objection, which *Moses* had more than once made, of his Defectiveness in Speech, tells him, *I have made thee a God to Pharaoh, and Aaron shall be thy Prophet*, Exod. vii. 1. by which he does not only mean, that he had invested him with an Authority to require of *Pharaoh* an Obedience to his Commands, and upon his Refusal, to inflict such Punishments on him, as none but God cou'd inflict; but that, in executing the Commission, he was putting him upon, there was no Occasion for him to speak to *Pharaoh* himself. That he had appointed *Aaron* to do; and therefore he might keep himself upon the Reserve, and *Pharaoh* at an awful Distance, just as God delivers his Oracles to the People by the Mediation of his Prophets. Only there is one Objection against the Passage itself, which some imagine cannot be genuine, because *Moses* makes use of the Word *Nabi*, for a Prophet, which, in his Days, must have been express'd by another: For so, in 1 Sam. ix. 9. it is said, *that he, who was now call'd Nabi, a Prophet, was before that Time call'd Rech, a Seer*; which seems to imply, that *Nabi* was not a Word in Use till *Samuel's* Days. But this is very far from *Samuel's* Meaning, whose plain Sense is this, — That he, who fore-

told



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he had constituted *Aaron* to be his *Interpreter*; that he must not be discourag'd at some few Repulses; that *Pharaoh*, he knew, was a Man of so obstinate a Temper, that the more he was punish'd, the less he wou'd relent, but that the less he relented, the more wou'd his Wonders be shewn on him and his People; that, to this Purpose, he had invest'd him with the Power of working Miracles, which wou'd make him justly terrible; and that therefore, when they came into *Pharaoh's* Presence, and he demanded a Proof of the Truth of his Mission, he shou'd direct *Aaron* to cast his Rod upon the Ground, and it shou'd immediately become a Serpent.

The Miracles,  
which the Ma-  
gicians cou'd  
imitate.

WITH these Instructions *Moses* and *Aaron* came again to the King, and repeated the Demand of his dismissing the *Israelites*: Whereupon, when the King desir'd them to shew him some Miracle, thereby to induce him to believe, that the God, whom they spoke so much of, had really sent for

them, *Aaron* threw down his Rod, which was instantly chang'd into a Serpent; but, (to confront this Miracle) the King sent for the *Magicians* and *Sorcerers* of *Egypt*, and order'd them to try, if, by their *magical Arts*, they cou'd cause the like Transmutation. They attempted, and succeeded: They chang'd their Rods into Serpents, as the other had done, but with this remarkable Difference, that *Aaron's* Rod swallow'd up all the Rods of the *Magicians*, which was enough to have convinc'd the proud Monarch of the superior Power of the God of *Israel*, had not his Heart been so averse to the Thoughts of parting with the *Hebrews*, that he did not let this Circumstance make any due Impression upon his Mind.

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SOME Time after this, *Moses* and *Aaron* put themselves in the Way of *Pharaoh*, as he was walking out to the \* River *Nile*, and, urging again the Demand, they had made for the Departure of their Brethren,

as

told Things to come, or discover'd Secrets, was antiently call'd a *Seer*, not a *Prophet*, for a *Prophet* heretofore signify'd only an Interpreter of the divine Will; but that now (in *Samuel's* Days) they began to apply the Word *Nabi*, or *Prophet*, to those, who cou'd reveal any Secret, or foresee Things to come. *Pool's* Annotations, *Le Clerc's*, and *Patrick's* Commentaries.

\* The River *Nile* has its Fountain-Head in the Upper *Ethiopia*, and proceeds from two Springs, about twenty Paces distant from one another, and each of the Bigness of a Cart-Wheel. About three Days Journey from the Fountain-Head, the River grows wide, and deep enough to carry a Vessel; and, having receiv'd another River into its Bosom, it pursues its Course westward for above 25 or 30 Leagues from its Head, and then, winding about to the East, it falls into a great Lake, which is probably that of *Zaire*. At its coming out of this Lake it makes several Windings towards the South, waters the Country of *Alata*, and from thence precipitates itself, between Rocks of 14 Fathom high, with a terrible Noise, and raises such thick Vapours, that, at a Distance, they may be taken for real Clouds. After having water'd several Provinces to the East, it continues its Course so far into the Kingdom of *Goiam*, that it comes within a Day's Journey of its first Source, and thence takes a Tour round about, and runs towards *Phencho* and *Ombuco*. Here it winds about again, and having, from East to North, cross'd several Kingdoms and Provinces, it comes into *Egypt* at the *Cataracts*, which are vast Falls of Water, which it makes from steep Rocks of no less than an hundred Foot high. From the Top of these Rocks the Water falls with such Violence, that it makes a Kind of Arch, under which one may pass without being wet, and with such an hideous Noise, as may be heard full three Leagues off. At the Bottom of these Rocks, it returns to its usual gentle Pace, with which it flows through the Plains of *Egypt*, in a Channel, about a League broad, tho' modern Travellers say much less. When it comes below *Memphis*, about eighty Miles from *Grand Cairo*, it is divided into two Arms, which make a Kind of Triangle, having the *Mediterranean-Sea* for its Base, and, by Reason of its Figure, is by the *Greeks* call'd *Delta*. These two Arms were formerly divided into five small ones; and from thence came the common Phrase of *Septemplicis ostia Nili*; but they are now so choak'd up with Sand, that they are scarce discernable. This is the only River in *Egypt*, and contains all the Water the Inhabitants have to drink, which made the turning it into Blood an heavy Judgment upon the People. The Overflowing of the River (which most impute to the great Rains, which fall, and melt the Snow in the Mountains of *Ethiopia*) is the Cause of all the Plenty and Fruitfulness of the whole Country: And therefore *Plutarch*, and several others tell us, that nothing was had in so much Veneration among the *Egyptians*; that they ador'd, and invocated it, as the greatest of Gods, not only under the Name of *Osiris*, but of *Orus* and *Jupiter* likewise, and instituted in its Honour the most solemn of their Feasts; and therefore their Conjecture, who think that *Pharaoh* went to pay his Morning Devotions to the River *Nile*, is much more plausible, than that of the *Chaldee Paraphrast*, who, that he went to observe Divination upon the Water, as a Magician, when, in all Probability, his Business was no more, than to bathe himself, as the Custom among the *Egyptians* was to do almost every Day. *Cabnet's* Dictionary, *Wells's* and *Moll's* Geographies, and *Bedford's* Scripture Chronology. l. 3. c. 4.



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as a farther Sign that God had really sent them, upon *Aaron's* stretching out his Hand, and touching the Waters of the River with his Rod, all the Waters of the Land of *Egypt* were turn'd into Blood, and continu'd so for seven Days; so that \* the Fish died, and the Inhabitants had no Water to drink, but were forc'd to dig, in new Places, for some to allay their Thirst. But *Pharaoh*, finding that his *Magicians* did turn Water into Blood likewise, and supposing the Thing, on both Sides, to be equally perform'd by *magical Skill*, was not convinc'd by the Miracle, and so refus'd to let the *Israelites* depart.

WHEN the seven Days were expir'd, *Moses* and *Aaron* came again unto him, requiring the Dismission of the People, and withal assuring him, that, if he did not grant their Request, they shou'd bring a Plague of † Frogs upon all the Land, and when the King seem'd to set them at Defiance, *Moses* order'd *Aaron* to stretch his Rod again over the Waters; upon doing

of which there came up Abundance of Frogs, so as to cover the whole Land of Egypt, and to swarm in their Houses, their Chambers, their Beds, and the very Places, where their Victuals were dress'd: But here it also happen'd, that the *Magicians* likewise perform'd the same, so that *Pharaoh* was not much influenc'd by this Miracle. Only, as his *Magicians* cou'd not remove the Frogs, he was forc'd to apply himself to *Moses* for Relief, who, upon his Address to God, had them all destroy'd the next Day, according to the Time that he had prefix'd; but, when they were gather'd into Heaps, their Number was so great, that, before they cou'd well be dispos'd of, they infected the Air, and made the whole Land stink.

THERE were several other Miracles wrought by *Moses* and *Aaron* in the like Manner. The Swarms of † Lice, which the *Magicians* cou'd not imitate; the Murrain, or Mortality among their Cattle, wherein the *Israelites* were exempted; † the

And those, which they cou'd not.

\* *Diodorus Siculus*, in his Description of *Egypt* (l. 1. p. 32.) informs us, that the River *Nile* abounded with all Manner of Fish, though later Travellers tell us, that there are not, at present, many in it; whether this may be attributed to the Muddiness of its Water, or to the Hawock, which the *Crocodiles*, and other Monsters of this River may be suppos'd to make in it. But, whether *antient* or *modern* Geographers are right in this Particular, 'tis certain that this Putrefaction of the Water, and slaying the Fish, was a very heavy Judgment upon the *Egyptians*, who abstain'd from the eating of most Animals, whose Liquor was generally Water, and whose constant Food, was the Fruits of the Earth, and the Fish of this River. *Le Clerc's* Commentary, and *Wells's* Geography of the Old Testament, Vol. 2.

† The River *Nile* naturally produces Frogs; but so great an Abundance, appearing on a sudden, filling the Country, and leaving the Rivers and Fields, to go into the Cities and Houses, was really miraculous. How they got into the Cities and Houses, is not so hard a Matter to conceive: For, if expert Generals, according to both *antient* and *modern* History, have sometimes surpris'd an Enemy, by entering Cities through the *Common-sewers*, with much less Difficulty might the Frogs, these Armies of the divine Vengeance, find a Conveyance into the Cities, which stood all upon the Banks of the River, by Aqueducts and subterraneous Communications; and, being got into the Cities, they might find Apertures in the Walls of the Houses, which the Inhabitants never perceiv'd before. *Bibliotheca Bibl. in Locum.*

† Some wou'd have the Word *Cinnim*, which we render *Lice*, to signify Gnats. The *Septuagint* call them *Κυνίπες*; but what Kind of Creatures these were is not so certainly known. Others wou'd have them to be a new Species of Animals, call'd analogically by an old Name; or, if they were *Lice*, that they were such as had Wings, and cruelly stung and ulcerated the *Egyptians*. But upon the Supposition, that they were no worse, than common *Lice*, this was Plague enough to the *Egyptians*, who affected Neatness to such a Degree, that they bath'd themselves every Day, and some of them frequently shav'd their Bodies all over, for fear of such Vermin. Those who pretend that these *Lice* were a new Species, make this a Reason, why the *Magicians* cou'd not counterfeit this Miracle, because, tho' they cou'd easily provide the Serpents, the Blood, and the Frogs, yet this Sort of Animal was now no where to be had; and therefore, as the Organs of Sight are more liable to be impos'd upon, than those of Feeling, the *Magicians* might impose upon the King, and the other Spectators, with fantastical Blood and Frogs, but visionary *Lice* cou'd not vex and torment the Body: So that now it was Time for the *Enchanters* to desist, and to own their Inability to mimic *Moses* any farther. But supposing, that what the *Magicians* did, in the three former Miracles, was not Illusion and Imposition upon the Senses, but Reality, the true Reason, why they cou'd proceed no farther, was, that God Almighty had laid his Restraint and Prohibition upon the evil Spirits, who had hitherto been subservient to them, that they might not assist them any longer. *Le Clerc's* Commentary, and *Bibliotheca Bibl. in Locum.*

† The Word *shob*, which we render Fly in general, is, by the *Septuagint*, call'd *Κυνοβία*, i. e. Dog-fly, from its biting; for it falls its Teeth so deep in the Flesh, and sticks so very close, that it oftentimes makes Cattle run mad;



A. M.  
2433, &c.  
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1571, &c.

the Plague of *Flies*; † the *Boils* inflicted upon the *Magicians* themselves; the terrible *Thunder* and *Lightening*, † *Rain*, and *Hail*, which destroy'd the Fruits of the

Earth; the Plague of the † *Locusts*, or *Grasshoppers*, which devour'd what escap'd from the *Hail*; and that of thick † *Darkness*, which cover'd all *Egypt* for three Days, while

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mad; and the Congruity of this Plague seems to be greater, because one of the *Egyptian* Deities, which they call'd *Anubis*, bore the Head of a Dog. The Psalmist indeed tells us, that *God sent divers sorts of Flies among them, which devour'd them*, Psal. lxxviii. 45. So that, according to him, it was not one particular Kind, but *all Sorts* of Flies mingled together in one prodigious Swarm or Conflux. Some translate it a *Mixture of Beasts*, which they suppose went into *Egypt* to infest and destroy the Country; but this is not so probable a Construction, because the Punishments, hitherto inflicted, were nauseous and troublesome, rather than mortal; though this Plague of infinite Numbers of small Tormentors is so great a one, that God calls it his Army, *Joel* ii. 25; and that the *Greeks* thought fit (as *Pliny*, l. 10. c. 28. tells us) to have a God to deliver them from it, under the Stile of *Myiagros*, or *Myiodes*, even as *Belzebub* signifies the Lord or God of Flies. *Bochart*, Hier. Pt. II.

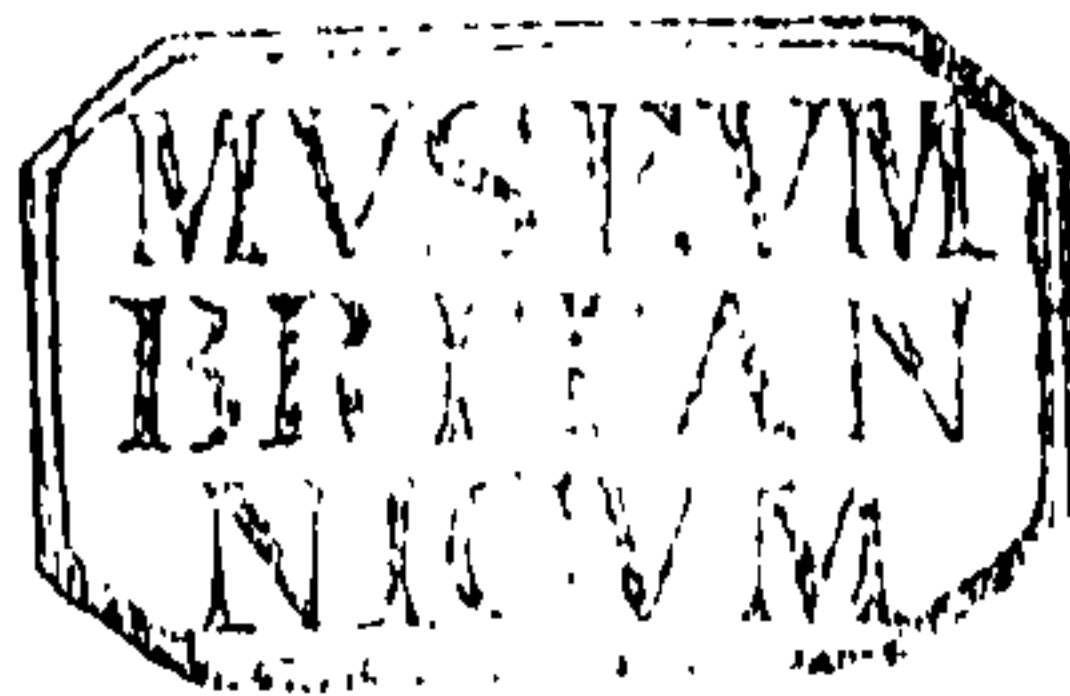
† The Hebrew Word *Shechin*, properly signifies an *Inflammation*, which first makes a Tumour or Boil (as we translate it) and thence turns into a grievous Ulcer. Dr *Lightfoot* indeed observes, that, in the Book of *Job*, Chap. ii. 7, 8. where the same Word occurs, it signifies only a burning Itch, or an inflam'd Scab; an intolerable dry Itch, which *Job* cou'd not scratch off with his Nails, and was therefore forc'd to make use of a *Posherd*: But then he confesses that this *Shechin*, here spoken of, was more cancerous than that, having Blains and Ulcers, that broke out with it, which *Job's* had not. So that the *Egyptians*, according to this, must have been vex'd with a treble Punishment at once (a Punishment fitly calculated for the Mortification of a delicate and voluptuous People) aking Boils, nauseous Ulcers, and a burning Itch: And to this that Commination of *Moses* to the People, in case they prov'd disobedient, does, without all Peradventure, allude: *The Lord will smite thee with the Botch of Egypt, and with the Emroids, and with the Scab, and with the Itch, whereof thou canst not be heal'd*. Deut. xxviii. 27.

† This Infection was the more terrible in *Egypt*, because, according to the Account of *Herodotus*, (l. 3. c. 10.) a very rare Thing it was, to see any *Rain*, and much more any *Hail* in that Climate: And, accordingly, he mentions it as a Kind of Prodigy, that, in the Reign of *Psalmenitus*, there happen'd to be a Shower, in *Thebes*, which was never known before in the Memory of Man, nor ever after, to the Age wherein our Author wrote. The Psalmist has given us a very poetick Description of this Judgment: *He destroy'd the Vines with Hail, and the Sycamore-Trees with Frost: He gave up the Cattle also to the Hail, and their Flocks to hot Thunder-Bolts*, Psal. lxxviii. 47, 48. And from the Plain Account of *Moses*, where he mixes *Thunder*, *Hail*, and *Fire* together, Exod. ix. 23. the Observation is obvious, that here were no less than three of the Elements in Confederacy against *Pharaoh's* Obstinacy; the *Air* in the *Thunder*; the *Water* in the *Hail*; and the *Fire*, in the *Lightening*, all jointly demonstrating, and proclaiming, that the God of *Israel* was the God of Nature.

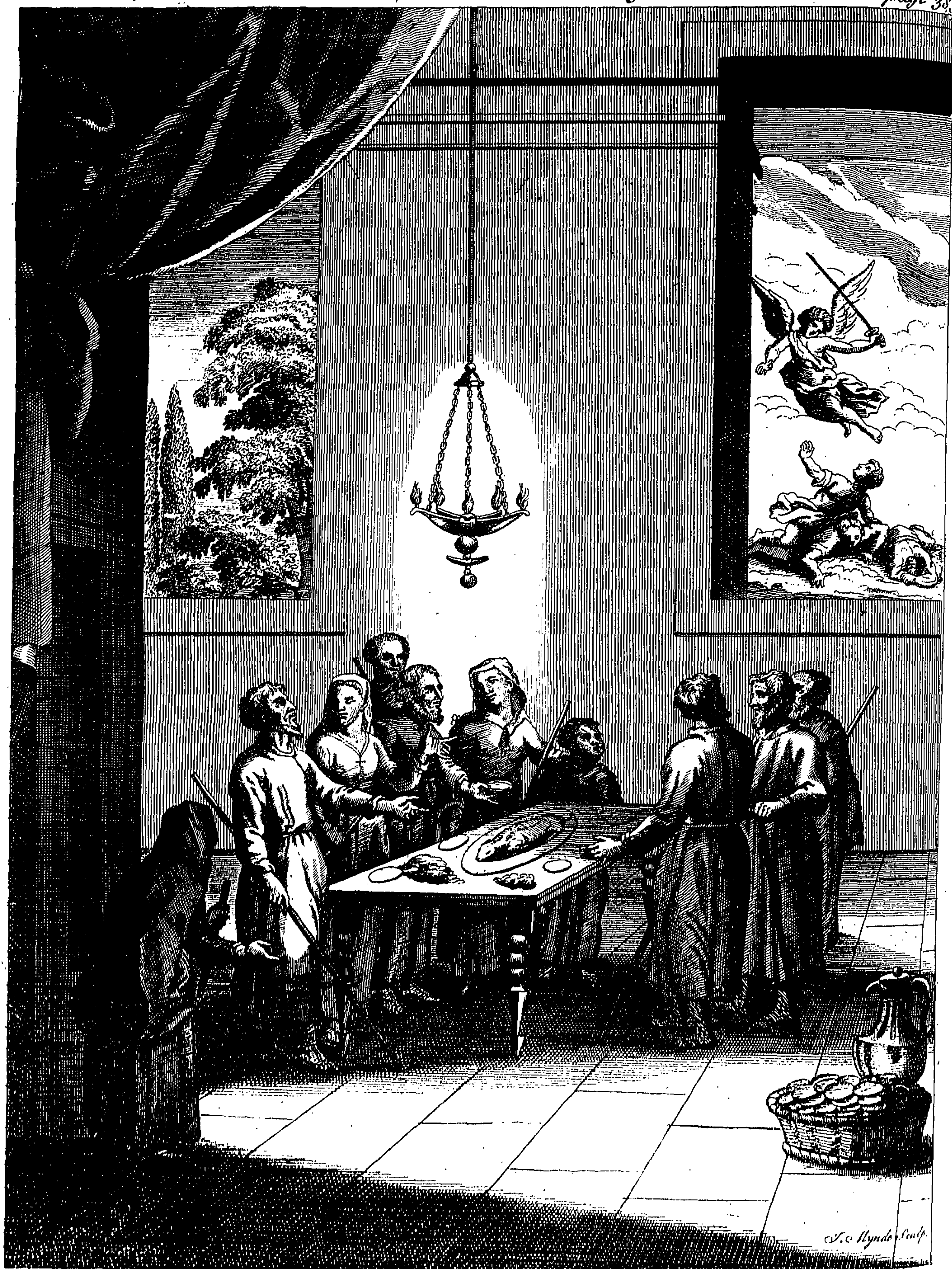
† This is the Creature, which we properly call the *Grasshopper*; and wonderful is the Account, which several Authors give of them. *Thevenot*, in his Travels tells us, "That in that Part of *Scythia*, which the *Cossacks* now inhabit, there are infinite Numbers of them, (especially in dry Seasons) which the North-East Wind brings over from Tartary, Circassia, and Mingrelia, which are seldom or never free from them; that they fly in the Air all compact together, like a vast Cloud, sometimes 15 or 18 Miles long, and about 10 or 12 Miles broad, so that they quite darken the Sky, and make the brightest Day obscure; and that wherever they light, they devour all the Corn in less than two Hours Time, and frequently make a Famine in the Country. These Insects, says he, live not above six Months; and when they are dead, the Stench of them so corrupts and infects the Air, that it very often breeds dreadful Pestilences." God (as we hinted before) calls the *Locust*, the *Canker-worm*, *Caterpillar*, and the *Palmer-worm*, his great Army, which he sends amongst a wicked and rebellious People, *Joel* ii. 25. And how proper the Expression is, in Relation to the *Locust* in particular, will appear from the Account which *Aldrovandus* and *Fincelius* give us of these Animals, viz. "That, in the Year of the Lord 852, an infinite Number of them was seen to fly over twenty Miles in Germany in one Day, in the Manner of a form'd Army, divided in several Squadrons, and having their Quarters apart, when they rested; that the Captains march'd a Day's Journey before the rest, and chose the most opportune Places for their Camp; that they never remov'd 'till Sun-rising, at which Time they went away in as much Order, as an Army of Men cou'd do; that, at last, having done great Mischief, wherever they pass'd (after Prayers made to God) they were driv'n, by a violent Wind, into the Belgick Ocean, and there drown'd; but that, being cast by the Sea, upon the Shore, they cover'd 140 Acres of Land, and caus'd a great Pestilence in the Country:" Which is enough to shew how dreadful a Punishment this was, especially considering, that these *Locusts* were such, as were never known before, and yet the ordinary *Locust* (as *Aristotle* and *Pliny* have describ'd it) was an Animal so fierce and formidable, that one single one wou'd kill a Serpent, by taking it fast by the Jaws, and biting it to Death. *Arist.* Hist. Animal. l. 5. c. 23. *Pliny's* Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 9. and *Le Clerc's* Commentary.

† The *Septuagint*, and most Translations render it, a *Darkness*, which might be felt, i. e. consisting of black Vapours and Exhalations, so condens'd, that they might be perceiv'd by the Organs of Touch. But, some Commentators think, that this is carrying the Sense too far; since, in such a Medium as this, Mankind cou'd not live an Hour, much less for the Space of three Days, as the *Egyptians* are said to have done: And therefore they imagine, that instead of a *Darkness* that may be felt, the Hebrew Phrase may signify a *Darkness*, wherein Men went groping and feeling about for every Thing, they wanted. And in this Sense the Author of the Life of *Moses* certainly takes it:

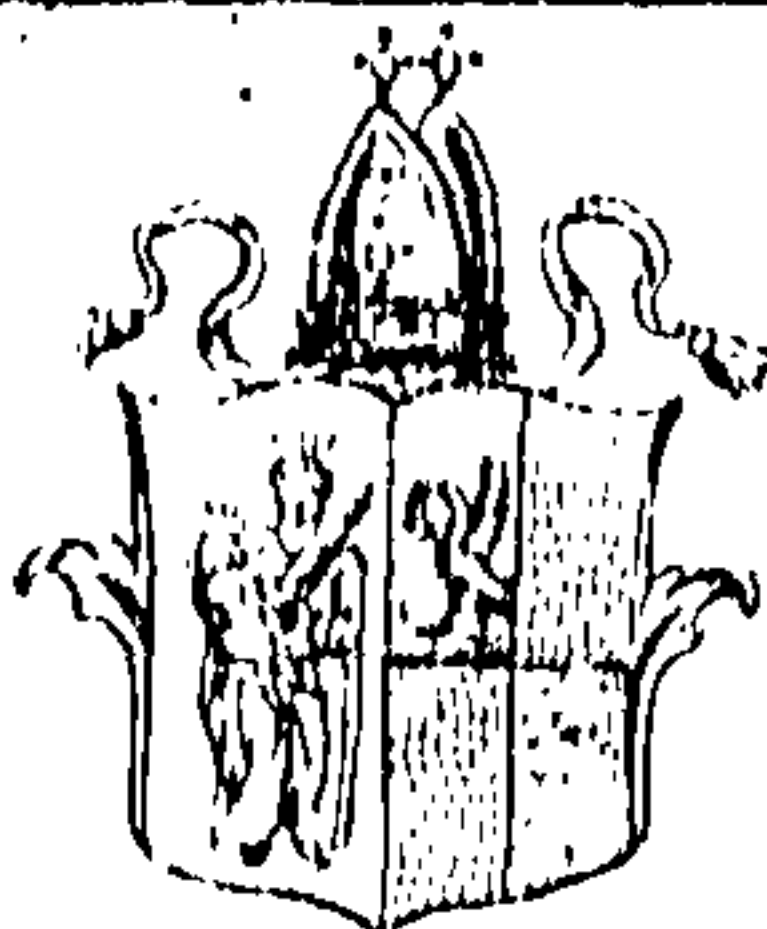
"For,







To the right Reverend Father in  
SALISBURY this plate is most  
most Dutiful & Obedient Son and



God BENJAMIN Lord Bishop of  
humbly inscribed by his Lordships  
Servant Tho: Stuckhouse



A. M.  
2433, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1571, &c.  
Hereupon the  
King begins to  
relent.

while the Land of *Goshen*, (where the *Israelites* liv'd) was enlighten'd as usual. All these Miracles, perform'd by the Word of *Moses*, did not a little perplex the King. He found, that all the Power and Learning of the *Magicians* cou'd not equalize them. Upon attempting one of them, they themselves confess'd, that it was done by *the Finger of God*; and, in the Case of another, they were equally Sufferers in the common Calamity: So that the King's Heart was, several Times, almost overcome. He offer'd the *Israelites* Leave to perform their religious Offices to their God, provided they wou'd do it in *Egypt*; but their Religion, (*as Moses told him*) was so very different from the *Egyptian*, that were they to do what God requir'd of them in *Egypt*, the Inhabitants wou'd \* rise up against them, and stone them. The King, after this, offer'd that they might go out of the Kingdom, provided *adult* Persons wou'd only go, and leave their Children behind, as Pledges for their Return; but to this *Moses* peremptorily replied, that none shou'd be left behind, the Young and the Old shou'd go together; which enrag'd *Pharaoh* so, that, with some severe Menaces, he order'd him to depart from his Presence. However, as he found the Plagues increase upon him, he came to a farther Concession, and was willing that the People shou'd go, but only that their Flocks, and their Herds shou'd be stay'd, as rightly supposing, that this might be a Means to accelerate

their Return: But *Moses* positively insisted that all their Substance shou'd be taken with them, and *not one Hoof be left behind*; whereupon *Pharaoh* grew so exceeding angry, that he charg'd him to be gone his Presence, and never attempt to see him more, for, that if he did, he wou'd certainly put him to death.

*Moses* however, by the divine Command, went once more to *Pharaoh*, with the severest Message, he had ever brought him, and represented to him, that, at Mid-night, God wou'd strike dead the First-born of every Family throughout all the Land of *Egypt*, and that thereupon there shou'd be such a Dread, and Terror among the *Egyptians*, that they wou'd come to him in the most submissive Manner, and beg of him to lead the People out of the Land, and after that, *said he, I shall go*; which put *Pharaoh* into such a Rage, that *Moses*, having no Intention to incense and provoke him farther, turn'd away, and left him.

FOUR Days before this, God had instructed *Moses* and *Aaron* to direct the People to prepare the *Passover*, which was to be a *Feast* in Commemoration of their Departure out of *Egypt*; because the Night before they left it, the destroying Angel, who slew the First-born of the *Egyptians*, pass'd over the Houses of the *Israelites*, without doing them any Harm, they being mark'd with the Blood of the Lamb, which was kill'd the Evening before. And the Injunction, which *Moses* gave the People, was

From Exod.  
i. to Chap.  
xiii.

*Moses's last  
Message to  
him.*

*The Institu-  
tion of the  
Passover.*

"For, in this Darkness, *says he*, they, who were in Bed, durst not get up, and such, as their natural Occasions compell'd to get up, went feeling about by the Walls, or any other Thing, they cou'd lay hold on, as if they had been blind." What it was, that occasion'd this *Darkness*; whether it was in the *Air*, or in their *Eyes*; whether it was a Suspension of *Light* from the Sun in that Country, or a black and thick Vapour, which totally intercepted it; there is Reason to think, that the Description, which the Author of the *Book of Wisdom* gives us of their inward Terrors, and Consternation, is not altogether conjectural, viz. That they were not only Prisoners of *Darkness*, and fetter'd with the Bonds of a long Night, but were horribly astonish'd likewise, and troubled with strange Apparitions: For, while over them was spread an heavy Night, they were to themselves more grievous than *Darkness*, Wild. xvii. 2, 3, 21. *Le Clerc's* Commentary, and *Philo's* Life of *Moses*.

\* The Words in the Text are, *Lo, shall we sacrifice the Abominations of the Egyptians before their Eyes, and shall they not stone us?* Exod. viii. 26. Where the Interrogation, having in it the full Force of an Affirmation, makes the Sense of the Words to be this: "If we shou'd offer those Creatures, which the *Egyptians* worship for Gods, as the Ox, and the Sheep, they doubtless will be affronted to see us sacrifice their Gods to our God." For, that the *Egyptians* did look upon several Animals with a sacred Veneration, is evident from that known Passage in the *Satyriss*.

Inanatis Animalibus abstinet omnis  
Mensa: Nefas illic factum jugulare Capellæ.

*Juven. Sat. 15.*



A. M.  
2433, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1571, &c.

was to this Effect ; — That † every Family of *Israel* (or, if the Family was too little, two neighbouring Families joining together) shou'd on the *Tenth* Day of the Month, take a Lamb or a Kid, and shut it up until the *fourteenth* Day, and then kill it ; that the Lamb was to be a *Male*, not above a Year old, and without any manner of *Blemish* ; that when they kill'd it, they shou'd catch its Blood in a Vessel, and with a Bunch of *Hyssop* dipp'd in it, sprinkle the *Lintel* and *Side-posts* of the outer Door, and so not stir out of the House until next Morning ; that in the mean Time, they were to eat the Lamb or Kid, (dress'd

whole, and without breaking a Bone of it) neither *raw*, nor *sodden*, but *roasted*, with *unleaven'd* Bread, and bitter Herbs ; that if there was more than they cou'd dispense with, no Stranger was to eat of it, and therefore they were to burn it ; and, lastly, that the Posture, in which they were to eat it, was to be in a Hurry, with their Cloathes on, and their Staves in their Hands, as if they were just upon the Point of going.

WHEN every Thing was thus in Readiness for their Departure, God, in the Middle of the Night, by his destroying Angel, † flew the First-born of every House

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i. to Chap.  
xiii.

And the Occa-  
sion of the  
Israelites leav-  
ing Egypt in  
haste.

† Some learned Men are of Opinion, that God, in the Institution of the *Passover*, had respect to those impious Rites, which either then did prevail, or, in a short Time, were to prevail among the *Egyptians*, and other Nations, where the *Israelites* were to dwell. Thus they tell us, “ That God appointed a Lamb to be slain, and eaten, and the “ Month *Nisan* or *March*, to be the particular Time of eating it, in Contempt of the *Egyptians*, who, at that Time, “ when the Sun first enter'd into *Aries*, began their solemn Worship and Adoration of this Creature, and that “ celestial Sign ; that he forbid the People to eat the Flesh of the *Paschal* Lamb *raw*, or *sodden*, to break its Bones, “ or leave any Fragments of it, because, in the profane Feasts of *Bacchus*, it was a Custom to eat the raw Flesh of “ the Victims, which they offer'd to that God, and to break all their Bones ; and, in the Adoration of the *Isis*, “ whom the *Egyptians*, and, from them, the *Athenians*, reputed *Goddeesses*, they boil'd all their Sacrifices, and carry'd “ constantly some Part of them home, as a good Preservative against Misfortunes.” But there is no need, one wou'd think, for such elaborate Explications, when, considering the Situation the *Israelites* were in, sorely oppress'd by the *Egyptians*, and shortly to be releas'd, and sent away with all Speed, the Nature and Quality of the *Paschal* Sacrifice, as well as the Manner of dressing, and Manner of eating it, may perfectly be accounted for. Thus it was to be a *Male*, because a more excellent Species than the Female ; without *Blemish*, to render it acceptable to God ; under a Year old, otherwise it cou'd not properly be call'd a Lamb ; and set apart from the rest of the Flock, that it might be in Readiness, when the People came in haste to offer it. Roasted it was to be, and not boil'd, because roasting was the speedier Way of dressing it ; but roasted thoroughly, because the whole was to be eaten ; and the whole was to be eaten, that none might be left for the *Egyptians* to profane. It was to be eaten standing, and in haste, and with other Circumstances of Men every Moment expecting to begin their Journey ; with bitter Herbs, to put them in Mind of their cruel Servitude ; and unleaven'd Bread, in Memory of their Deliverance from it, so suddenly, that they had not even Time to leaven their Bread for their Journey ; which is all that the *Israelites* understood, and all perhaps that God, at that Time, intended they shou'd understand, by the Directions, which he gave them concerning this remarkable Ordinance. *Spencer de Rit. Heb. Tom. I. l. 2. c. 4.*

† The Word *Bekor* signifies sometimes a Person of some Eminence or Excellence, as well as the First-born : And therefore it may not be an unreasonable Supposition, that, where a Family had no First-born, the principal, or most eminent Person, was smitten with Death : Which is certainly better, than to imagine, with some, both *Jew* and *Christian* Interpreters, that the Words of *Moses* are only applicable to an House that had a First-born, or with *St Austin*, that Providence did so order it at this Time, that every House had a First-born. Since this however is the concluding Judgment, which God sent upon the *Egyptians*, it may not be improper here to enquire a little how long *Moses* was in working all these Miracles. According to Archbishop *Usher* then, (who has included them all within the Space of one Month) we may suppose, that, about the 18th Day of the sixth Month, was sent the Plague of the Waters turn'd into Blood, which ended seven Days after. On the 25th came the second Plague of Frogs, which was remov'd the Day following, and on the 27th, that of the Lice. About the 28th *Moses* threaten'd the fourth Plague of Flies, and inflicted them on the 29th. On the 1st of the next Month, (which was afterwards made the first Month of the Year) he foretold the fifth Plague of the Murrain, and inflicted it the next ; and on the 3d, the sixth Plague of Boils, which fell upon the Magicians themselves. About the 4th Day, he foretold the seventh Plague of Thunder and Hail, and on the 5th inflicted it. On the 7th, he threaten'd the eighth Plague of Locusts, and, having sent them the Day following, remov'd them on the ninth. On the 10th he instituted the Feast of the Passover, and brought upon Egypt the ninth Plague of Darkness, which lasted for three Days ; and on the 14th, he foretold the Tenth, viz. the Destruction of all their First-born, which came to pass the Night following. This seems to be a reasonable Period of Time ; and the gradual Increase of these Judgments is somewhat remarkable. The four first Plagues were loathsome, rather than fatal, to the *Egyptians* ; but after that of the Flies, came the Murrain, which chiefly spent its Rage upon the Cattle : The Boils and Blanes reach'd both Man and Beast, though there was still a Reserve for Life. The Hail and Locusts extended, in a great Measure, even to Life itself ; the first by an immediate Stroke, and both consequently by destroying the



A. M.  
2433, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1571, &c.

House in *Egypt*, from the Prince, who sat on the Throne, to the meanest Slave; but, among the *Israelites*, none was hurt, because the bloody Mark, upon the Door-posts, was a Token for the Angel not to strike there. At Midnight there was a sudden Out-cry and Confusion among the *Egyptians*: The dying Groans of their Children awoke them; and, when they perceiv'd that in every Family, without Exception, the *First-born*, both of Man and Beast, were dead, they came immediately to *Moses* in a great Fright and Terror, and desir'd him to get the People together, and to take their Flocks, and their Herds, and all that belong'd to them, and be gone, because they cou'd not tell, where such dreadful Judgments wou'd end. *Moses*

had before-hand, according to God's Order, directed the *Israelites* to borrow of the *Egyptians* Silver and Gold Vessels to a great Value; and God had, at this Time, dispos'd the Hearts of the *Egyptians* to lend them every Thing they ask'd for. The Truth is, they were in a Manner frighted out of their Wits, and so urgent were they to have the *Israelites* gone, that they wou'd not let them stay, so much as to bake their Bread, but oblig'd them to take the Dough, raw as it was, along with them, and bake it, as well as they cou'd, upon the Road: From whence it came to be a Law, that, during the whole eight Days of the Passover, no other Bread, than what was unleaven'd, was to be eaten.

From Exod.  
i. to Chap.  
xiii.

### The OBJECTION.

“ THE Services, which *Joseph* did  
“ the Crown of *Egypt*, were so  
“ many, and so very remarkable, that  
“ one can hardly imagine, that a *Nation*,  
“ who ow'd their Lives to him, (a) as  
“ they themselves confess, or a *King*, who  
“ was indebted to him for so large an  
“ Augmentation of his Revenue, shou'd  
“ ever lose the Remembrance of so able a  
“ *Minister*. But allowing this to be a  
“ *Frailty* in human Nature, that we are  
“ unmindful oftentimes of our best *Bene-*  
“ *factors*; yet, what Reason cou'd there  
“ be, why the *Egyptians* shou'd, all on a  
“ sudden, take it in their Heads to treat  
“ the *Israelites* so inhumanly, a Company  
“ of poor harmless Shepherds, who cou'd  
“ give no Molestation to any Government:  
“ Or, if it be in the Nature of Man to be  
“ *cruel*, why shou'd a God of infinite  
“ *Mercy* and *Compassion* suffer his own  
“ People, for whom he profess'd so par-

“ ticular a Regard, to undergo so long,  
“ and so severe a Servitude, when we  
“ read of no Sins, and Provocations extra-  
“ ordinary on their Parts to excite him to  
“ it?

“ To repel Violence, and vindicate the  
“ Oppress'd, are certainly Acts of great  
“ Generosity; but, even this may not be  
“ done, to any high Degree, without a  
“ proper Authority: And therefore,  
“ when we find *Moses* killing an *Egypt-*  
“ *tian*, because he mal-treated an *Hebrew*  
“ Brother, we cannot but think, that he  
“ transcended his Commission; that he  
“ acted the Part of a *Magistrate*, when  
“ he was but a *private* Man, and was  
“ therefore guilty of wilful *Murder*, as  
“ himself seems to have been conscious,  
“ by burying the dead Body in the  
“ Sand.

“ By all that appears in *Moses's* Wri-  
“ tings, he seems to have had a compe-

5 Y

“ tent

the Fruits of the Earth. That of *Darkness* added Consternation to their Minds, and Lashes to their Consciences; and when all this wou'd not reclaim, at length came the decisive Blow; first the *Excision* of the *First-born*, and then the drowning of the incorrigible Tyrant and all his Host: great and marvellous are thy Works, O Lord, God Almighty! just and true are thy Ways, thou King of Saints! Rev. xv. 3.

(a) Gen. xlvii. 25.



A. M.  
2433, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1571, &c.

“tent Knowledge in Matters of Reli-  
“gion; and yet it may justly raise our  
“Wonder, how he came, at the Age of  
“Fourſcore, to be ſo ignorant of the  
“very *Name of God*, as to enquire of him  
“by what Title he was to diſtinguiſh  
“him, when he carried his Meſſage to  
“the *Iſraelites*; nor does the Title, or  
“Definition of *I am that I am*, which  
“he makes God give of himſelf, and  
“ſeems to carry in it a *Reproof* to *Mofes*’s  
“Queſtion, convey, in the leaſt, any  
“poſitive or diſtinct Idea of what the  
“Divine Nature is.

“GREAT and hazardous Actions  
“indeed are not to be enterpriz’d without  
“mature Thought and Deliberation; but  
“when *Mofes* was aſſur’d of the Divine  
“Appearance, and that it was God, in  
“Reality, who was then ſpeaking to him,  
“it favours of Perverſeneſs and Obſtinacy,  
“rather than any Humility or Diffidence  
“of himſelf, to frame ſo many idle Ex-  
“cuſes, in order to evade a Service, which  
“God was ſo deſirous to employ him  
“in.

“THE Sign however, which God gave  
“*Mofes* of the Certainty of his Succeſs,  
“viz. That on the Mountain, where  
“they then were, the *Iſraelites*, when  
“releas’d, ſhou’d come and *worſhip him*,  
“was not ſo very ſatisfactory; becauſe it  
“referr’d him to an *Event* a long while  
“poſterior to his *Miſſion*. Nor was his  
“Miſſion itſelf ſo very pleaſing to God,  
“one wou’d think, when the very next  
“News we have of him, is, that *he*  
“meets *Mofes* in the *Inn*, and threatens  
“to ſlay him, which put the whole Fa-  
“mily into a ſad Flutter, and made the  
“good Woman, to ſave her Huſband’s  
“Life, *circumciſe* her Son, though ſhe  
“ſcolded all the while, and call’d him a  
“bloody Huſband.

“THE Truth is, *Mofes*, in this Part  
“of his Hiſtory, has not ſo well con-  
“ſulted the Honour and Veracity of the  
“God, from whom he ſpeaks. When  
“he comes to *Pharaoh*, he requeſts only  
“the Grant of *three Days Journey into*

“*the Wilderneſs*, in order to offer Sacrifi-  
“ces to God; and yet it is apparent, that,  
“from the very firſt, he was meditating a  
“total Eſcape. When he ſpeaks to the  
“People, to give them Conſolation under  
“their Afflictions, he promiſes them a  
“*Land flowing with Milk and Honey*,  
“which denotes all Manner of plenteous  
“Proviſion; and yet, it is notorious,  
“that, not only *Strabo* has made it a  
“ſtony and barren Country, but all modern  
“Geographers and Travellers have likewiſe  
“given it a Character, that does not tend  
“at all to its Advantage.

“THE Conception which we have of  
“God, is, that he is a *Being* of infi-  
“nite Goodneſs, Juſtice, and Wiſdom,  
“who can do no cruel, no unrighteous,  
“no weak, or ſelf-repugnant Action; can  
“neither be the Author or Abettor of  
“any Wickedneſs in us; nor the Cauſe  
“or Promoter of any Matter, that de-  
“rogates from his own Glory and Great-  
“neſs: And yet, when we read of his  
“hardening *Pharaoh’s Heart*, we muſt al-  
“low it to be an Inconſiſtency with his  
“Goodneſs; of his ordering the *Iſrae-  
“lites* to ſpoil the *Egyptians*, an Infrac-  
“tion upon his Juſtice; and of his per-  
“mitting the *Magicians* to do the like  
“Miracles with his Servant *Mofes*, a  
“Diminution of his own Power, and,  
“in ſome Meaſure, a cancelling his own  
“Credentials: For how ſhall we know  
“that Miracles are true, and really  
“wrought by the Finger of God, when  
“God himſelf impowers evil Spirits, either  
“to work exactly the ſame, or to mi-  
“mick them in ſo artful a Manner,  
“that the moſt curious and attentive Eye  
“ſhall not be able to diſcern the Dif-  
“ference?

“THOUGH, therefore, we can give  
“no Reaſon, why *Mofes* ſhou’d be ſo very  
“complaiſant to *Pharaoh*, as to give him  
“Notice of the Time, when he intended  
“to inflict, or remove a *Plague*; yet  
“we can aſſign a very good one, why  
“*Pharaoh* ſhou’d ſend for the *Magicians*  
“and *Sorcerers* to confront *Mofes*: Nor

From Exod.  
i. to Chap.  
xiii.

“ is



A. M.  
2433, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1571, &c.

“ is it a bad Apology for his Noncom-  
pliance with God's Command to release  
his People, that he saw some of the  
self-same Miracles, as pretended to be  
*divine*, very dexterously done, either  
by the *Fascination* of some evil Spirit,  
or by the mere Power and Force of  
*Magick*.”

Answer'd, by  
shewing the  
Revolution,  
which hap-  
pen'd in E-  
gypt.

To account, in some Measure, for the Occasion of the Sufferings of the *Israelites* in the Land of *Egypt*, we must observe, that, in the fifth Year of *Concharris*, (whom *Josephus*, from *Manetho*, calls *Timeus*, and who, according to *Syn-cillus*, was the twenty-fifth King of the Land of *Tanis*, or *Lower Egypt*;) there came a numerous Army of *unknown* People, and invaded *Egypt* on a sudden. They over-ran both the *Upper* and *Lower Egypt*; burn'd the Cities, kill'd the Inhabitants, and, having, in a little Time, subdu'd all before them, made one of their Leaders, whose Name was *Salatis*, their King; who, as soon as he was settled on the Throne, laid the Land under *Tribute*, made its antient Inhabitants his *Slaves*, and gave the Possession of their Estates to his own People. Who this *Salatis* and his Followers (who call'd themselves *Pastors* or *Shepherds*) were, is not so easy a Matter to discover. The most probable Conjecture is, that they were some of the *Horites*, whom the Children of *Esau* drove out of *Seir*, (a Country, which lay to the *East* and *South* of the *Dead-Sea*) because the *Horites* were a People, who liv'd by Pasturage, and happen'd to be expell'd their own Country much about this Time. *Egypt* indeed was a very flourishing Kingdom, but so far from being famous for War, that we read of none of their Exploits of this Kind from the Time of their first Establishment, to this very Day. They consum'd their Time in Ease, and Wealth, and Luxury; and therefore the *Horites* (if they were the *Horites*) might easily conquer them, and gain themselves a Settlement in their Kingdom, even as the *Arcadians* did in *Thrace*, and the

*Pelasgi*, and afterwards the *Trojans*, in *Italy*. From Exod. i. to Chap. xiii.

HOWEVER this be, the Government of *Egypt* being by this Means subverted, the Protection and Happiness, which the *Israelites* enjoy'd, perish'd with it. This new King, as the Scripture calls him, knew nothing of *Joseph*, nor did he regard any Establishment, which he had made. He had forc'd his Way into *Egypt* with his Sword, and settled his People by Conquest, in such a Manner, and upon such Terms, as he thought fit: Only, as the *Hebrews* were a great and increasing People, inhabiting those Parts which he most suspected, and fearing lest, if any Invasion shou'd happen from the *East*, or any Insurrection among the antient Inhabitants, they possibly might join with them, and so endanger his new Acquisition, he thought it a Point of good Policy to use all proper Means to keep them effectually under.

ONE of the great *Mysteries* in the Dispensations of Providence, is, God's making Choice of the Children of *Israel* for his peculiar People, when it is so manifest (as *Moses* roundly tells them) that they were a *stiff-necked* Nation, and (b) *had been rebellious from the very first Day that he knew them*. (c) *God will be gracious to whom he will be gracious, and will shew Mercy to whom he will shew Mercy*: But, upon Supposition that the Children of *Israel* did not behave so well, during their Abode in *Egypt*, that they neglected the Worship of the true God, and comply'd too much with the *idolatrous* Customs of the Country; this will afford us Reason enough, why God might suffer their Sorrows to be multiply'd, and their Enemies to ride over their Backs. (d) *He does not, indeed, afflict willingly, nor grieve the Children of Men*; and therefore, we may presume, that this severe Chastisement of his Rod was to make them smart for some great and *national* Defection; was to remind them of their sad Degeneracy from the Virtue of their Ancestors; and so (in the Phrase of the Prophet) (e) *to look*

And why God  
suffer'd the Is-  
raelites to be  
distress'd.

(b) Deut. ix. 24.

(c) Exod. xxxiii. 19.

(d) Lam. iii. 33.

(e) Isa. li. 1, 2.



A. M.  
2433, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1571, &c.

look unto the Rock, whence they were hewn, and to the Hole of the Pit, whence they were digged; to look unto Abraham their Father, and unto Sarah that bare them.

BUT even putting the Case, that they had not been thus culpable; yet, since (f) *whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every Son whom he receiveth*, who can say, but that God might justly permit such Calamities to befall a People, whom he had *adopted* for his own, the more to exercise their Virtue, and Patience, and Resignation to the Divine Will; (g) the more to keep up a Distinction between them and the *Egyptians*, which a friendly Usage might have destroy'd; the more to prepare, and make them willing to leave *Egypt*, whenever God shou'd send them an Order to depart; and the more to heighten the *Relish* of their future Deliverance, and to make them more thankful, more obedient to him, and his Injunctions, upon every Remembrance of that *House of Bondage*, wherein they had suffer'd so much, and been so long detain'd?

Moses's Truth  
as an Historian.

OF all the Writers of the *Histories of their own Times*, there is none to be compar'd to *Moses* in this Regard, that he reveals his own Faults and Blemishes, which he might have easily conceal'd, and conceals many Things, recorded in other Authors, which might have redounded to his own immortal Honour. He might have conceal'd the near *Consanguinity* between his *Father* and *Mother*, which, in After-Ages, made Marriages unlawful, though then perhaps it might be dispens'd with. He might have conceal'd his *Murder* of the *Egyptian*, and, for Fear of Apprehension, his *Escape* into *Midian*. He might have conceal'd his *Aversion* to the Office of rescuing his Brethren from their Bondage; the many frivolous Excuses he made, and the flat Denial, he gave God at last, 'till God was in a Manner forc'd to obtrude it upon him. He might have conceal'd his Neglect in not circum-

cising his Son, which drew God's angry Resentment against him, so that he *met* him, and wou'd have *slain* him. He might have conceal'd some peevish Remonstrances, he made to God, when *Pharaoh* prov'd obstinate, and refus'd to comply. Above all, he might have conceal'd the whole Story of the *Magicians*, their working three Miracles equally with him, and every other Circumstance, that seem'd to eclipse his Glory: But, instead of this, we may observe, that, as he makes a large Chasm, in his Life, from his Childhood to his being *Forty* Years old, and from *Forty* to *Fourscore*; so he has left us nothing of the incomparable *Beauty* and *Comeliness* of his Person; nothing of the Excellency of his natural *Parts*, and Politeness of his Education; nothing of his *Ethiopian* Expedition, the Conquests he made there, and the Posts of Honour, which he held in the *Egyptian Court*; nothing, indeed, of all the Transactions of the preceding Part of his Life, but what the Author to the *Hebrews* has taken Care to transmit, *viz.* (h) *that when he came to Years, he refus'd to be call'd the Son of Pharaoh's Daughter, chusing rather to suffer Affliction with the People of God, than to enjoy the Pleasures of Sin for a Season.* So that here we have a signal Evidence of the Truth and Honesty of our Historian, that in the Passages of his own Life, he conceals such, as an Impostor wou'd be fond to emblazon, and discovers others, which any Man of Art and Design wou'd be careful to conceal; though even some of these Passages, which, at first Sight, may seem to deserve some Blame, upon a farther Enquiry, may be found to be excusable at least, if not to be justify'd.

WHOMEVER was the Author of the Book of *Job*, it is certain, that he was a Writer of great Antiquity, and yet he makes it a Part of the Character of that righteous Man, that he (i) *delivered the Poor, when he cried, and the Fatherless, and him that had no Helper; that he brake the Jaws of the Wicked, and plucked the Spoil*

From Exod.  
i. to Chap.  
xiii.

(f) Heb. xii. 6.

(g) Sherlock, on Providence.

(h) Heb. xi. 24, 25.

(i) Job xxix. 12, 17.



A. M.  
2433, &c.  
Ant. Chriſt.  
1571, &c.

*Spoil out of his Teeth.* If this may be thought to relate to *Job*, as a publick Magistrate only, there is a Direction in the *Proverbs of Solomon*, which seems to be of a more general Concernment; (k) *If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto Death, and those that are ready to be slain; If thou sayest, behold, we knew it not; doth not he, that pondereth the Heart, consider it? And he, that keepeth thy Soul, doth not he know it? And shall not he render to every Man according to his Works?* If this be thought again not to affect *Moses* at all, as being at this Time, an Inhabitant of *Egypt*; there was in *Egypt* likewise a Law, (l) which perhaps, at this Time, was in Force, and obligatory upon all, viz. "That, whoever saw his Fellow-Creature, either kill'd by another, or violently assaulted, and did not either apprehend the Murderer, or rescue the Oppress'd if he cou'd, or, if he cou'd not, made not an Information thereof to the Magistrate, himself shou'd be put to death." Now the History tells us, that, (m) *when Moses went out unto his Brethren, he looked on their Burthens, and spied an Egyptian smiting an Hebrew.* So that, it is but supposing, that this *Egyptian* was one of the *Task-Masters* (as the *Burthens* here mention'd seem to denote) who so barbarously treated the *Hebrews*, and was now going to beat one of them to death; and, according to the Law of the Land (which seems indeed to be the Law of all Nations) then in being, he was oblig'd to interpose; and if, upon his Interposition, the *Egyptian* turn'd upon him, and assaulted him briskly, (which is no hard Matter to imagine) he was oblig'd, in his own Defence, to slay him.

(n) To complain to the Magistrate in this Case, and implore the Assistance of the Law, was to no Manner of Purpose. The whole Civil Power was lodg'd in such Hands, as had secret Instructions from Court to vex and ill-treat the *Israelites*; and when Matters were come to this Cri-

sis, that Oppression rul'd, and the Government was turn'd into a mere *Latro-ciny*, private Force, upon any proper Occasion, must be deem'd lawful in all, but in *Moses* much more so, since he was either mov'd and animated thereunto by a divine Impulse, or invested, before it happen'd, (as (o) *St Stephen's* Comment upon the Place gives us Reason to think he was so invested) with the Title, and Office of *Deliverer of the People of God*.

THAT the Names both of *Persons* and *Things* were of the greatest Importance to be rightly understood, in order to attain the truest Knowledge, that cou'd be had, of their *Natures*, was the Opinion both of *Jews* and *Heathens*; and some of the earliest Writers of the *Christian Church* have speculated upon this Subject, with so much philosophical Subtlety, as to build thereon many foolish Fancies, and ridiculous Errors. It cannot be deny'd indeed, but that God, in giving some Names, that are recorded in Scripture, had respect to the Nature and Circumstances of the Persons, to whom they belong'd; and that in Imitation of him, Men endeavour'd, even from the Beginning, to give Names as expressive of the Properties of the Things nam'd, as human Wisdom cou'd direct them: And therefore, without troubling ourselves with what the Ancients have offer'd concerning the *Science* of Names, we may from hence deduce the true Reason, why *Moses* desir'd to be inform'd, at this Time more especially, what the Name of God was.

IF we consider the small Advances, which Philosophy had made, we cannot imagine, that Men, at this Time, had a sufficient Knowledge of the Works of the *Creation*, to be able thereby to demonstrate the *Attributes* of God; nor cou'd they, by Speculation, form proper and just Notions of his *Nature*. Some of them indeed, the Philosophers of that Age, though themselves wise enough to attempt these Subjects; but what was the Success?

5 Z

(p) *Pro-*

From Exod.  
i. to Chap.  
xiii.

Why Moses  
desir'd to know  
God's Name.

(k) Prov. xxiv. 11, 12.  
*Chere's* Commentary in Locum.

(l) Diodorus Siculus, l. i. p. 69.  
(o) Acts vii. 25.

(m) Exod. ii. 11.

(n) *Le-*



A. M.  
2433, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1571, &c.

(p) *Professing themselves to be wise, they became Fools, and changed the Glory of the incorruptible God.* After they had speculated never so long on any Element, the *Fire*, *Air*, or *Water*, the Convex of the Firmament, the Circle of the Stars, or the Lights of Heaven, not forming true Notions of their Natures, they were either delighted with their *Beauty*, or astonish'd with their *Power*, and so framing very *high*, but *false* Estimates of them, they lost the Knowledge of the Work-Master, and took the Parts of his Workmanship to be God.

M O S E S, indeed, might be a Man of excellent Parts; but we carry our Compliment too far, if we think him not liable to have fallen into these, or perhaps more dangerous Errors, had he endeavour'd to form his Notions of God, either from the *Egyptian*, or any other Learning, that was then extant in the World. *Faith*, or a Belief of what God had reveal'd; was the only Principle, upon which he cou'd hope rightly to *know God*; and this was the *Principle*, which *Moses* here desires to go upon. For, as the *Revelation*, which God had hitherto made of himself, was but short and imperfect; so *Moses*, by desiring to know God's Name, desir'd that he might have some Revelation of his Nature and Attributes vouchsaf'd him; for, that the *Name* of God does frequently signify the Divine Nature and Attributes, is evident from several Passages in Scripture.

W H E N *Moses* desir'd to see God's Glory, he obtain'd, that the *Name* of the Lord shou'd be proclaim'd before him, and the Proclamation was; (q) *The Lord, the Lord God, merciful, and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in Goodness and Truth, keeping Mercy for Thousands, forgiving Iniquity, Transgression, and Sin.* And, in like Manner, *Isaiah*, prophesying what the Messiah shou'd be, declares his *Name* to be (r) *Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.* In both these Places, and many more, that might be produc'd to the same

Purpose, the *Name* denotes the *Nature* of God; and therefore the Design of *Moses*, in asking God's Name, was to obtain an Information of the Divine Attributes, in order to carry a Report of them to his Brethren. And indeed, considering that *Moses* was the first, that ever carry'd a Message from God to Man, it was natural for the *Israelites* to ask him by what *Name*, or peculiar *Attribute*, he had made himself known unto him, so as to authorize him to speak to them, in such a Manner, as no Man before had ever done; which Question he cou'd not pretend to answer, unless God, by Revelation, thought fit to enable him, and therefore he desir'd to be confirm'd (as far as the Divine Goodness wou'd be pleas'd to discover) what *Name* he wou'd be call'd by, as knowing very well, that, by obtaining *this*, he might form proper Notions of his Nature and Perfections.

A N D, accordingly, we may observe, that this great Appellation, which God is here pleas'd to give of himself, expresses his incomprehensible Nature, in such open and proper Characters, that St *Hilary* (as he tells us of himself) lighting on these Words, before he was a *Christian*, and as he was musing about God and Religion, was struck with Admiration, because he cou'd think of Nothing so proper and essential to God, as *to be*. God himself, however, chuses to express the Word in the *future Tense*, on Purpose, (as some imagine) to shew, that he is the only Being, that can truly say, *I shall, or will be, what I am*; for as much as all other Beings derive their Existence from him, and may be depriv'd of that Existence, whenever he pleases.

W H A T Knowledge the wisest of the *Heathen* World might have of this *incommunicable* Name of God, without the Help of Revelation, is a Matter of great Uncertainty. It is more than probable, that *Plato's* Definition of a God, *viz. A Being, that is always, and had no Beginning*, was borrow'd from these Words of

*Moses*:

From Exod.  
i. to Chap.  
xiii.

The Propriety  
and Meaning  
of God's  
Name.

(p) Rom. i. 22, 23.

(q) Exod xxxiv. 6, 7.

(r) Isa. ix. 6.



A. M.  
2433. *Ec.*  
Ant. Christ.  
1571. *Ec.*

*Moses*: But, there is a Passage in *Plutarch*, which mentions an Inscription in the Temple of *Delphos*, consisting of these Letters *E I*, a Contraction, as some imagine of *EIMI*, *I am*, which (according to the Opinion of (s) a great Judge in those Days) was one of the most perfect Names and Titles of the Deity, seeing it imported, that, “tho’ our Being is uncertain, precarious, temporary, and subject to change, so that no Man can say of himself, in a strict and absolute Sense, *I am*; yet we may, with great Propriety, give the Deity this Appellation, because God is independent, immutable, eternal, always, and every-where the same;” for (t) *I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, the First and the Last, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.*

Why Moses  
was so backward  
to go into  
Egypt to  
rescue his  
Brethren.

BUT all this wou’d not work upon *Moses* to undertake the Office, to which God call’d him; and yet, when we come to consider his Case, we cannot altogether accuse him of Perverseness or Obstinacy. About forty Years before, he had felt some extraordinary Motion in himself, and, as he was then in the Fervour of his Youth, he took it for a certain Indication, that God intended to make use of him as an Instrument for his People’s Deliverance; but then he was a far greater Man, than now. The Princess, (if alive) who had adopted him for her Son, supported his Interest at Court; or, if dead, had, in all Probability, left him a Fortune sufficient to procure himself one. But now, Age had made him cool and considerate. The Loss of his Patroness had quash’d all aspiring Thoughts. A long Habitude had perfectly reconcil’d him to an obscure Course of Life: And therefore, as one loth to be rous’d from his Solitude, (u) *who am I*, says he, *that I shou’d go unto Pharaoh, and that I shou’d bring forth the Children of Israel out of Egypt?*

He had already experimentally known the Ingratitude and Disingenuity of the He-

*brews*: (x) *When he supposed they wou’d have understood, that God, by his Hand, wou’d have delivered them*, he voluntarily offer’d his Service; but their Rejection of him, when in the Height of his Power, upon so great an Alteration in his Circumstances, took away all Hopes of Success in so difficult an Enterprize. So that the principal Error, which *Moses* incurr’d upon this Occasion, was no more than a Distemper incident to the Generality of Mankind, viz. the measuring of God by himself, and judging of Events, from the Probabilities or Improbabilities of *second Causes*.

BUT there is another Reason, not to be dissimbled, which might possibly deter *Moses* from returning into *Egypt*, and that was the Blood of the Man, for which he had fled into *Midian*, and his certain Knowledge of the Laws of that Land, viz. (y) that “whoever kill’d another, whether he was bond, or free, was not to escape with his own Life.” Just before God appear’d to him in the Bush, and had this Discourse with him, we read, that (z) *the King of Egypt died*, that King, to wit, in whose Reign he had slain the *Egyptian*, and who sought to apprehend him, that he might put him to death: But, as *Moses* kept no Manner of Correspondence with *Egypt*, the News of this King’s Death might not have reach’d his Ears, or if it had, he might reasonably think, that some surviving Relation of the slain Man might enter a Process against him for the Murther. So that here he fell into a Passion, which is hardly separable from human Nature, viz. the Love of Life, and Dread of Punishment; and which in him was the more excusable, because God, as yet, had not clear’d his Mind from the Fear and Suspicion it lay under.

It must not be deny’d then, but that there were some Tokens of human Frailty in *Moses’s* last Refusal of the Commission, which was offer’d him; but then there

From Exod.  
i. to Chap.  
xiii.

(s) *Ammonius*.  
*Siculus*, l. i. p. 76.

(t) Rev. i. 8, 11.  
(u) Exod. ii. 23.

(v) Exod. iii. 11.

(x) Acts vii. 25.

(y) *Diodorus*



A. M.  
2433, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1571, &c.

there is this to say in Excuse, that the most excellent Persons are the least forward to embrace the Offers of great Preferment. For if no Authority (according (a) to *Plato*) is design'd for the Benefit of him that governs, but of those that are govern'd; no wise and considerate Man will voluntarily take upon him the Government of a People, but must either be hir'd, or compell'd to it: And therefore *Moses*, considering the great Weight of the Employment, out of a due Sense of his own Infirmities, declin'd it as long as he cou'd. And tho' Mention is made in Scripture of the (b) *Lord's being angry with him*, yet this Anger cou'd amount to no more, than such a Displeasure, as a Father conceives at his Child, when, notwithstanding all that can be said and done, to create in him a just Confidence, he still continues bashful and diffident of himself.

The Significance of the Sign which God gives to Moses.

It may be thought perhaps by some a farther Excuse for *Moses's Backwardness*, or, at least, no great *Encouragement* to his Undertaking, that God makes the Sign, wherewith he wou'd seem to ratify his Promise, of a Date so subsequent to his Commission. (c) *I will certainly be with thee, and this shall be a Token unto thee, that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the People out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this Mountain.* For how can a future Event serve for a Sign of the Accomplishments of a present Promise? The common Solution of this Difficulty is — That God design'd this for a Token to *Moses*, in order to root out of his Heart all Remains of *Infidelity*, which might perhaps be found in him, even after he had delivered the *Israelites* out of Bondage; but this is a Sense by no Means allowable. For how can we suppose, that, after God had brought out his People with *an high Hand, and a stretch'd-out Arm*; by making himself justly terrible to *Pharaoh* and all his Court; by turning Rivers of Water into Blood; by changing the Day into Night; by slaying all the First-born

in *Egypt*, and by causing the King and his whole Army, to be swallow'd up in the same Waves of the Sea, which (d) *were a Wall on the Right-hand and on the Left*, and open'd a Way for his own People to pass: How can we suppose, I say, that this *faithful Servant* of his shou'd have the least Doubt, whether this mighty Deliverance was to be ascrib'd to *Providence* or *Chance*? Or, if there was any farther Occasion for *Tokens*, why shou'd a *smaller*, than any of the foregoing, be propos'd? Or, when propos'd, why shou'd it be presum'd sufficient to produce an Effect, which others, much more considerable, were found incompetent to do?

To evade these Questions, some of the *Jewish* Doctors have devis'd a new Partition of the Words; and, when God says to *Moses*, *this shall be a Token to thee*, they think he means it of the *Bush*, from whence he spake, all *on Flames without consuming*, which was, questionless, Token enough, *that God had sent him*; and thereupon they make the subsequent Words the Beginning of a fresh Sentence, and declarative of a farther Purpose, for which God wou'd *bring forth his People out of Egypt*, even that, from that Mountain, he might give them a Law, which was to be the Rule and Directory of their Religious *Worship* and *Service*. But there is no Necessity for this Subterfuge, when the Difficulty may be fairly resolv'd, by distinguishing the Promises of God into two Kinds; those, that depend on certain Conditions, and those that have no Conditions at all.

To be the Messenger of the *former* Kind of Promises is exercising a glorious Ministry, but then it is a Ministry attended with Danger. He, upon whom God confers it, may live in perpetual Fear of promising something without Effect; because they, to whom the Promise is made, may forfeit it by not performing the requisite Condition: But Nothing can discourage the Man, to whom God has given a Com-

Exod. Form  
i. to Chap.  
xiii.

(a) De Repub. I. 1.

(b) Exod. iv. 14.

(c) Exod. iii. 12.

(d) Exod. xiv. 22.



A. M.  
2433, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1571, &c.

a Commission of the *latter* Kind, because the Infallibility of the Event supports him against all the Obstacles, that can possibly arise.

Now to apply this to the Case in Hand. When God promises *Moses* a Deliverance of his People, *Moses* might fear, that their Impiety, or Unbelief, might be a Bar, and Obstruction to their Deliverance; and therefore, God, in order to cure him of this Fear, endeavours to make him sensible, that the Promise, he now gives him, was not *indefinite* and *general*, like those which depended on certain *Conditions*; but that it was one of those, whose Accomplishment was decreed in the divine *Councils*, independent on any Event, or any Condition; and therefore he not only *promises*, but *foretels*, and particularises the nicest and minutest Circumstances. He not only acquaints him, that his People shall be deliver'd, but he describes to him the exact Place, where, after they found themselves set at Liberty, they were to pay their Homage to their Deliverer: And this *Detail* is the Token, that God gives him of the Certainty of the Event.

To illustrate this by a parallel Instance. When the Armies of *Sennacherib* besieg'd *Jerusalem*, *Hezekiah* began to fear that they wou'd take it: To secure him against that Fear, *Isaiah* promises him an approaching Deliverance. *Hezekiah* is afraid, lest the Sins of the People shou'd stand between him, and the divine Goodness: To secure him against this Apprehension likewise, and to convince him, that the Resolution, God had taken to deliver his People, was *irrespective* and *infallible*; (c) *this shall be a Sign to thee*, says he, *ye shall eat this Year such Things, as grow of themselves, and in the second Year, which springeth of the same, and in the third Year sow ye, and reap, and plant Vineyards, and eat the Fruit thereof.* To return to *Moses*.

HAD this Promise indeed been the only Sign, which God had given him, it might have administer'd some Umbrage of *Suspi-*

*cion*; but when it was attended with several other *Signs and mighty Wonders*, it cou'd not but be of great use for the Confirmation of his *Faith* in his present Undertaking, since he knew it was as certain, as if it had already been effected, because it proceeded from the Mouth of the *Almighty*, whose Promises, when absolute and unconditional, are always *Yea and Amen*.

I KNOW of few Passages, more difficult to be understood, than that which contains the Adventure of *Moses's* Family in the Inn, (f) *where the Lord met him, and sought to kill him, until Zipporah took a sharp Stone, and cut off the Fore-Skin of her Son, and cast it at his Feet, and said, surely a bloody Husband art thou to me.* *Zipporah* is commonly represented as a *perverse* and *froward* Woman, who look'd upon *Circumcision* as a *cruel* and unnecessary Ordinance, and therefore prevail'd with her Husband, (who perhaps might be too indulgent to her in the Case of her younger Son) to omit it. But it ought to be consider'd, that, as she was a *Midianitish* Woman, and descended from *Abraham* by his Wife *Keturah*, she cou'd not have any Aversion to the Rite of *Circumcision*, in which she acquiesc'd, in the Case of her elder Son *Gershom*, and in which she was so expert, that, upon her Husband's Incapacity, she herself perform'd the Operation upon the *Younger*.

THE *Midianites* might perhaps, in this Respect, imitate their Neighbours the *Ismaelites*, who did not circumcise their Children, until they were thirteen Years of Age; and, for this Reason, some have imagin'd, that *Moses's* Son had not, as yet, undergone the Operation: But *Moses* knew very well, that there was a *Limitation* of Time in the Institution of the Ordinance, and therefore the more probable Reason for this Omission seems to be, that they were now upon their Journey, when *Zipporah* was brought to-bed, and that therefore they might think,

6 A

that

From Exod. i. to Chap. xiii.

*Moses censur'd for neglecting to circumcise his Son.*

(c) 2 Kings xix. 29.

(f) Exod. iv. 24, 25.



A. M.  
2433, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1571, &c.

that the Danger of the Wound to the Infant might excuse the deferring of his Circumcision, as it excus'd the *Israelites afterwards* in the Wilderness.

BUT, as it does not appear that *Moses* lay under any Necessity of taking his Family, especially his Wife with Child, along with him; so this Omission of circumcising his Son might be imputed to him as a greater Fault than ordinary, because he may be suppos'd to have understood the Will of God, concerning this *Rite*, more perfectly, than any other Man; and was, but just before, reminded of the Benefit of that *Covenant*, whereof this Ordinance was a Seal, and some Part of which he was going now to take Possession of.

BUT how absurd wou'd it have been, for *Moses* to be made a *Law-giver* to others, when himself liv'd in an open Violation of God's Laws? Or to be appointed a chief Ruler and Instructor of the *Israelites*, to whom he was to inculcate the Obligation of this Ordinance, and on whom he was to inflict *Pains* and *Penalties* for their Neglect of it, when himself was guilty of the same Sin? Nor was this Omission only a great Sin in itself, but a great *Scandal* likewise to the *Israelites*, who, by his Example, might very likely be led into the same Miscarriage, and be tempted to suspect the *Call* of a Person, who shew'd such a visible Contempt of God's Law. As *Moses* therefore was a *publick* Person, and just invested with a *Commission* from God, his Disobedience to a known Law, was more enormous, his Example might have done more Mischief, and therefore God's Severity against him, either in afflicting him with some sudden *Sickness*, or affrightening him with some terrible *Apparition*, was necessary to remind him of his Duty. And, accordingly, whatever the Means was, we find, that it brought to his Wife's Remembrance the Neglect of their not having circumcis'd the Child; but we injure her Character, if we think, that the Words, which she is made to utter upon this Occasion, were any angry

*Taunt*, or Exprobation to her Husband, since, (according to the Exposition (g) of a very learned Writer upon the Text) they are not directed to him, but to her Son; and are not the Effect of any angry Resentment, but a *solemn* Form of Speech, made use of at the Time of any Child's *Circumcision*.

SEVERAL of the *Jewish* Doctors tell us, that it was a Custom of the *Hebrew* Women to call their Children, when they were circumcis'd, by the Name of *Chatan*, i. e. *Spouse*, as if they were now *espoused to God*; and to this Custom the *Apostle* perhaps might allude, when he tells his *Corinthians*, (b) *I am jealous over you with an holy Jealousy; for I have espoused you to one Husband, that I may present you as a chaste Virgin to Christ*. However this be, (i) *Zipporah*, who was an *Arabian* Woman, might the rather make use of this *Term*, and apply it to her Son, because the *Arabians* (whose Language has a great Affinity to the *Hebrew*, and who themselves, as Descendants from *Abraham*, did, all along, use the Rite of *Circumcision*) make the Word *Chatan* signify to *circumcise*, and *Chiten*, *Circumcision* (as manifestly appears in their *Translation* of the *New Testament*); which can no otherwise be accounted for, than from this Custom of calling a Child *Chatan*, when he is *circumcis'd*, even as we, because a Child in Baptism is made a *Christian*, use the Word *christen* for to *baptize*.

IF *Zipporah's* Words then were directed, not to her Husband, but the Child whom she had just now circumcis'd, their proper Meaning must be, *I, by this Circumcision, pronounce thee to be a Member of the Church*: For the Child, on the Day of his Circumcision, (says *Aben Ezra* upon this Text) was us'd to be call'd *Chatan*, because he was then first join'd to the People of God, and, as it were, *espous'd unto God*. And if this be the Sense of the Matter, *Zipporah* was so far from expressing any angry Resentment, or giving her Husband any opprobrious Language upon this Occasion

From Exod.  
i. to Chap.  
xiii.

His Wife's  
Conduct set  
right.

(g) *Mede's* Discourse 14.

(b) 2 Cor. xi. 2.

(i) *Mede's* 1. i. Discourse 14.



A. M.  
2433, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1571, &c.

sion, that she only did the Office of circumcising her Son, when she perceiv'd that the Delay of it had given Offence to God, and, in doing that Office, pronounc'd the Words over him, which us'd to be pronounc'd, whenever that Ceremony was duly perform'd.

THIS is an Interpretation, which, not only the *Septuagint*, and *Chaldee Paraphrast* seem to countenance ; but what most modern Masters of *Jewish Learning* have approv'd. And, as it seems to clear the Character of *Zipporah*, so may it receive some farther Confirmation from the subsequent Behaviour of the *Angel*, who, as soon as he saw the Ceremony perform'd, and heard the solemn Form pronounc'd over the Child, (k) *let Moses go, and did not slay him* ; whereas had the Operation been done in the Manner, that some pretend, *grudgingly*, and of *Necessity*, with inward Regret, and Words of Reproach to her Husband, this (one wou'd think) wou'd have incens'd the *Angel*, either to have continu'd the Punishment (be it what it will) upon *Moses*, or rather to have transferr'd it to his Wife, who, upon this Supposition, seems most justly to have deserv'd it.

UPON the whole therefore it appears, that the Words of *Zipporah* were address'd to her Son, and not her Husband, and were the usual Form of Admission into the *Jewish Church* ; that it was at the Child's Feet that she laid the Foreskin, and not threw it at her Husband in Anger, when she spake the Words above-mention'd ; and that, in this whole Affair, there was neither any Squabble between *Moses* and his Wife, nor any indecent Behaviour, or opprobrious Language us'd by her.

IT cannot be deny'd indeed, but that God, from the very first Day, that he appointed *Moses* to go to *Pharaoh*, intend'd to deliver his People from their Captivity, and, when once they were departed out of *Egypt*, that they shou'd never return again ; and yet they are directed

to demand only to go *three Days Journey into the Wilderness*. This was not the whole of what was intended ; but *Moses* lay under no Obligation to let so bitter an Enemy, as *Pharaoh*, into his whole Design. It is sufficient to absolve him from any Imputation of *Disingenuity*, that he acted according to the Instructions, which God gave him ; (l) and God certainly was not oblig'd to acquaint *Pharaoh* with all his Mind, but only so far as he thought proper : And, for wise and good Reasons, he thought proper to make the Demand no higher at first, than *three Days Journey into the Wilderness*, that, by his Denial of so modest a Request, he might make his Tyranny more manifest, and the divine Vengeance upon him more just and remarkable.

IT must be acknowledg'd again, that the Expression of *flowing with Milk and Honey*, when apply'd to any Country, like that of King *Solomon's making Silver to be in Jerusalem like Stones* (m), is *hyperbolic*. It denotes very rich Pastures and Grounds, which shou'd feed Cattle yielding Abundance of Milk, and which shou'd produce great Plenty of Flowers and Plants, for the Bees to make Honey. It represents indeed a general Fruitfulness all the Country over ; for which *Palestine* (according to the Account of Writers of no mean Character) was certainly once famous, however it came into *Strabo's* Head to disparage it. For (to mention an Author or two of some Note) *Aristæus*, who was *there* to bring the *Seventy Interpreters* into *Egypt*, tells us, that immense and prodigious was the Produce and Plenty, it afforded of Trees, Fruits, Pasture, Cattle, Honey, besides the Spicery, Gold, and precious Stones, imported from *Arabia*. (n) *Josephus* describes the Country, as it was in his Time, i. e. in the Time of our *Saviour* and his *Apostles*, as most remarkably fruitful and pleasant, and abounding in the very choicest Productions of the Earth. *Bochart*, much later, and since the Country has been inhabited by the *Turks*, liv'd in it for

From Exod.  
i. to Chap.  
xiii.

The Fruitfulness of the Land of Palestine.

No Fallacy in Moses's Demand.

(k) Exod. iv. 26. (l) *Pool's* Annotations in Locum.  
1. 5. and *Fuller's* *Pisgab-sight of Palestine*.

(m) 1 Kings x. 27.

(n) *Antiq.*



A. M.  
2433. &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1571. &c.

for the Space of ten Years, and, as he was particularly curious and diligent in informing himself in every Thing, speaks the greatest Things imaginable of the Richness of its Soil, and the Choiceness of its Products: And (to name no more) our own Countryman, Mr *Sandys*, who in the Beginning of the last Century travell'd through it, gives it the Character of *a Land adorn'd with beautiful Mountains, and luxurious Vallies; the Rocks producing excellent Waters, and no Part empty of Delight, or Profit*: And certainly those, who either were *Natives*, or have sojourn'd a long Time in a Country, may be suppos'd to have a more perfect Knowledge of it, than a *Foreigner*, who liv'd at a Distance, as *Strabo* did.

THE Truth is, if we consider of what a small Compass the Land of *Canaan* is, and yet what a prodigious Number of Inhabitants (both before, and after the *Israelites* became Masters of it) it maintain'd, we must conclude, it cou'd not but deserve the Character, which the Authors above-cited have given us of it; and the Barrenness and Poverty of its Soil, which some *modern Travellers* seem to complain of, must be imputed either to its Want of Tillage and Cultivation, (which the *Turks*, its present Inhabitants, are utterly ignorant of) or to the particular *Judgment* of God, who, for the *Wickedness* of any Nation, has frequently perform'd, what he threaten'd to the *Jews* of old; (o) *I will break the Pride of your Power, and I will make your Heaven as Iron, and your Earth as Brass, and your Strength shall be spent in vain; for your Land shall not yield her Increase, neither shall the Trees of the Land yield their Fruits.*

The hardening  
Pharaoh's  
Heart not from  
God.

SEVERAL Things are said in Scripture to be done by God, which are only permitted by him to come to pass in their ordinary Course and Procedure: And thus God may be said to *harden* Pharaoh's Heart, only because he did not interpose, but suffer'd him to be carry'd,

by the Bent of his own Passions, to that inflexible Obstinacy, which prov'd his Ruin. That *Moses*, to whom God us'd these Expressions concerning *Pharaoh*, understood them in this Sense, is evident from many Parts of his Behaviour to him, and especially from his earnestly intreating him to be persuaded, and to let the People go. (p) Had *Moses* known, or ever thought, that God had doom'd *Pharaoh* to unavoidable Ruin, it had been an unwarrantable Presumption in him to have persuaded him to have avoided it: But that *Moses*, with all possible Application, endeavour'd to make an Impression upon *Pharaoh* for his Good, is manifest from this Passage, (q) *glory over me, i. e. do me the Honour to believe me, when I shall intreat for thee, and for thy Servants*; wherein he makes an earnest Address to *Pharaoh*, to induce him to be persuaded to part with the People, which he certainly never wou'd have done, had he been satisfy'd that God himself had prevented his Compliance, on Purpose to bring him to Ruin.

From Exod.  
i. to Chap.  
xiii.

IT is farther to be observ'd therefore, that, not only in the *Hebrew*, but in most other Languages, the *Occasion* of an Action, and what in itself has no Power to produce it, is very often put for the *efficient Cause* thereof. Thus in the Case before us: (r) God sends *Moses* to *Pharaoh*, and *Moses*, in his Presence, does such miraculous Works, as wou'd have had an Effect upon any other: But because he saw some of the Miracles imitated by the *Magicians*; because the Plagues, which God sent, came gradually upon him, and, by the Intercession of *Moses*, were constantly remov'd; he thence took *occasion*, instead of being *soften'd* by this *Alternative* of Mercy and Judgment, to become more *sullen* and *obdurate*. When *Pharaoh* (as the Text tells us) *saw that the Rain, and the Hail, and the Thunder ceas'd, he sinned yet more, and hardened his Heart.*

The

(o) Levit. xxvi. 19, 20.  
*Cher's Commentary.*

(p) *Shuckford's Connection*, Vol. II. l. 9.

(q) Exod. viii. 9.

(r) *Le*



A. M.  
2433, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1571, &c.

The Mercy of God, which shou'd have led him to Repentance, had a contrary Effect upon him, and made him more *obstinate*: “ (s) For an harden'd Heart (as “ one expreffes it) is neither cut by Com- “ punction, nor soften'd by any Sense “ of Pity. It is neither mov'd by In- “ treaties, nor yields to Threatnings, “ nor feels the Smart of Scourges. It “ is ungrateful to Benefactors, treacherous “ to Counfels, fullen under Judgments, “ fearless in Dangers, forgetful of Things “ past, negligent of Things present, and “ improvident for the future;” All which bad Qualities seem to have concenter'd in *Pharaoh*. For, whatever might have contributed to his *Obduration* at first, it is plain, that, in the Event, even when the *Magicians* own'd a divine Power in what they saw done, and were quite confounded, when they felt themselves smitten with the Boils, and might thereupon very likely persuade him to surrender; he is so far from relenting, that he does not so much as ask a Remove of the Plague. It was therefore entirely agreeable to the Rules of *divine* Justice, when Nothing wou'd reclaim this wicked King; when even That, which wrought upon the Ministers of *Satan*, made no Impression upon him, to let his Crime become his Punishment, and to leave him to *eat the bitter Fruit of his own Ways, and to be fill'd with his own Devices*.

That the He-  
brews, at their  
Departure, did  
not rob the  
Egyptians.

THE *Israelites*, we own, did carry out of the Land of their Captivity several Things of great Value, which they had from the *Egyptians*: But then we are to consider, that the Word, which our Translators render *borrow*, does more properly signify *to ask of one*; and what they render *to lend*, is as literally *to give*. For the Case stood thus between the two Nations. (t) The *Egyptians* had been thoroughly terrify'd with what had passed, and especially with the last terrible

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Plague upon their *First-born*, and were now willing to give the *Hebrews* any Thing, or every Thing, only to get quit of them. They therefore brib'd them to be gone, and courted them with *Presents*, so very *profusely*, as even to impoverish themselves: But for this the *Israelites* were not at all culpable, because they only accepted of what the others gave them, and what was freely given, they doubtless had a Right to detain.

From Exod.  
i. to Chap.  
xiii.

BUT suppose that the *strict* Sense of the Word was, that they really did *borrow* many valuable Things of the *Egyptians*; yet it is a Truth allow'd on all Hands, that God, who is the supreme Lord of all Things, may, when he pleases, and in what Manner he pleases, *transfer* the Rights of Men from one to another. Considering then, that God was now become the King of the *Israelites*, in a proper and peculiar Manner; and considering farther, what insufferable Wrongs the King and People of *Egypt* had done to this People of God, who were now become his peculiar Subjects, and *Proprietary* Lieges; this Act of *spoiling the Egyptians* (even in the hardest Sense of the Word) was, according to the *Laws of Nations*, more justifiable, than Royal Grants of *Letters of Mart*, or other such like Remedies, as Kings are accusom'd to make use of against other Powers, that have wrong'd their Subjects, or suffer'd them to be wrong'd by those, that are under their Command, without making a proper Restitution. In short, whatever the *Hebrews* took from the *Egyptians*, they took, and possess'd it by the *Law of Reprisals*, i. e. by Virtue of a special Warrant from the Lord himself, who was now become, not their God only, but their peculiar King.

\* THAT some Compensation was due, in strict Justice, from the *Egyptians* to the *Hebrews*, for the great Services they had

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(i) Vide *Patrick's* Commentary.

(t) Scripture vindicated, Part II.

\* In the *Gemarah* of the *Sanhedrim*, there is told a memorable Story concerning this Transaction. In the Time of *Alexander the Great*, the *Egyptians* brought an Action against the *Israelites*, desiring that they might have the Land of *Canaan*, in Satisfaction for all they had borrow'd of them, when they went out of *Egypt*. To this *Gibeon Ben Kojam*,



A. M.  
2433, *Æc.*  
Ant. Christ.  
1571, *Æc.*

had done them, is what can hardly be deny'd: But supposing this *Borrowing* and *Lending* between them had been without any such Regard, yet, if the *Israelites* acquir'd a Right to these Things afterwards, there was then no Obligation for their making any Restitution. Now, that they acquir'd such a Right is manifest from the *Egyptians* pursuing them in an *hostile Manner*, and with a Purpose to destroy them, after they had given them free Liberty to depart; by which Hostility and Perfidiousness they plainly forfeited their Right to what they had only lent before. For this *hostile Attempt* (which wou'd have warrant'd the *Israelites* to have fallen upon the *Egyptians*, and spoil'd them of their Goods) did certainly warrant them to keep them, when they had them; so that now they became the *rightful Possessors* of what they had only upon Loan, and cou'd not have detain'd, without Fraud and Injustice, before.

Thus, in what View soever we contemplate this Fact, whether it be a voluntary *Donation*, made by the *Egyptians*; or an Act of *Reprisal*, made by the *Hebrews*; or a Deed of *Forfeiture*, which the former incurr'd by an unjust Invasion upon the latter; the *Hebrews* will be found not so culpable, as some wou'd make them: Nor can we see, where the pretended ill Tendency of such a *Precedent* can be, since it is allow'd on all Hands, that it is, in no Case, to be follow'd, unless it be evidently commanded by the same *divine Authority*.

MIRACLES indeed, we own, are the *Seals* and *Attestations* of God, to evidence the Truth of any Thing, that he is desirous the World shou'd believe; but

if *Magicians*, by the Assistance of evil Spirits, have Power to impose upon our Senses, or to work such Wonders, as seem altogether *miraculous*, we are left under a great Uncertainty how to determine our Judgments in this Case: And therefore, to give a full Solution to this Part of the Objection, we shall first premise something concerning the Nature of *Magick*, and how far its Power may extend towards the Operation of Miracles; thence proceed to enquire who the particular *Magicians* were, who pretended to oppose *Moses*, and upon what Account it was, that *Pharaoh* sent for them; thence to consider whether the Miracles, they *seemingly* wrought, were *real* or *fictitious*, or if *real*, why God permitted them to perform them; and thence to examine, whether this Permission tended any Way to prejudice the *Evidence* of *Moses's Mission* from God, or rather not to confirm it, seeing the Difference between them and *Moses*, in this Contest of working Miracles, was so visible and conspicuous.

THOSE, who have professedly treated of the *Magick Art*, have generally divided it into three Kinds, *natural*, *artificial*, and *diabolical*. (u) The first of these is no other, than *natural Philosophy*, but highly improv'd and advanc'd, whereby the Person, that is well skill'd in the Power and Operation of *natural Bodies*, is able to produce many wonderful Effects, mistaken by the Illiterate for *diabolical Performances*, even tho' they lie perfectly within the *Verge of Nature*. *Artificial Magick* is what we call *Legerdemain*, or Slight of Hand, whose Effects are far from being what they seem. They are Deceptions and Impostures, the very Tricks of *Jugglers*

From Exod.  
i. to Chap.  
xiii.

Of the several  
Kinds of Ma-  
gick.

*Kosim*, who was Advocate for the *Jews*, reply'd, That, before they made this Demand, they must prove what they alledg'd, viz. That the *Israelites* borrow'd any thing of their *Ancestors*: To which the *Egyptians* thought it sufficient to say, that they found it recorded in their own Books. Well then, says the Advocate, look into the same Books, and ye will find that the Children of *Israel* liv'd four hundred and thirty Years in Egypt; (Exod. xii. 40.) pay us then, said he, for all the Labours and Toils of so many thousand People, as you employ'd us all that Time, and we will restore what we borrow'd; to which they had not a Word to answer. *Patrick's Commentary*. It is to be observ'd however, that this Passage in *Exodus*, which the Advocate refers to, had respect to all the Pilgrimages of *Abraham* and his Posterity, from the Time of his setting out from *Charran* in *Mesopotamia*, to this their Departure out of *Egypt*, as we shall have occasion to shew very soon. Vid. p. 404.

(u) Bishop *Wilkins's* Tract of *Magick*, and *Edwards's* Body of Divinity, Vol. I.



A. M.  
2433, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1571, &c.

*Jugglers* (as we corrupt the Word *Joculatores*) far from exceeding the Power of Art, and yet what many Times pass with the Vulgar for *diabolical* likewise. *Diabolical* Magick is that, which is done by the Help of the Devil, who, having great Skill in *natural* Causes, and a large Command over the *Air*, and other *Elements*, may assist those, that are in League and Covenant with him (in Scripture call'd *Wizards, Sorcerers, Diviners, Enchanters, Chaldeans, and such as had familiar Spirits*) to do many strange and astonishing Things.

To deny that there ever were such Men as these, is to flight the Authority of all History; and, to guess at the probable *Rise* and *Original* of them, we may suppose it to be this—(x) That God, being pleas'd to admit the holy Patriarchs into Conference with him, the Devil endeavour'd to do the same; and, to retain Men in their Obedience to him, pretending to make Discoveries of secret Things; and that, when God was pleas'd to work Miracles for the Truth, he, in like Manner, directed those, who were *familiar* with him, how to invoke his Help, for the Performance of such strange Things, as might confirm the World in their *Error*.

UNDER which of these Denominations, *natural, artificial, or diabolical*, the Magicians, who set themselves in Opposition to the Servants of the Most High God, are to be rank'd, we have no Instructions from Scripture; but it seems highly probable, that neither wou'd *Pharaoh* have call'd together those of the least Capacity and Repute, neither wou'd the *Devil* (as far as his Power extended) have been backward to assist his *Votaries* upon such a solemn and momentous an Occasion, as this.

WHO the Principal of these Magicians were, our *sacred* Historian makes no mention: But several, both *Jewish* and *Heathen* Authors (from whom (y) *St Paul*,

without doubt, borrow'd their Names) have inform'd us, that among the *Egyptians* they were call'd *Jannes*, and *Jambres*, which, to give them a *Latin* Termination, wou'd be *Johannes* and *Ambrosius*, of whom *Numenius* (as he is quoted by *Eusebius*) (z) has given us this remarkable Account, viz. "That they were the *Scribes*, in religious Matters, among the *Egyptians*; that they flourish'd in *Egypt* at the Time, when the *Jews* were driven from thence; that they did not give place to any Body in the Science of *magical Secrets*; and, for this Reason, were chose unanimously by all *Egypt* to oppose *Museus* (so he calls *Moses*) a Leader of the *Jews*, and whose *Prayers* were very prevalent with God."

Now supposing that these, and who-

*The several Ways, wherein the Devil might assist them.*

ever else accompany'd them, acted from the highest *Principles* in *Magick*; there are two Ways, wherein we may imagine it in the Power of the Devil to be assistant to such Persons, as pretend to work Miracles.

THE *first* is, by raising false *Images* and Appearances of Things; which may be done, either by affecting the *Brain*, or confusing the *optick Nerves*, or altering the *Medium*, which is between us and the Object. That he did some such Thing, as this, to our blessed Saviour, when, from the Top of an high Mountain, he pretended (a) to *shew him all the Kingdoms of the World, and the Glory of them, in a Moment of Time*, is very plain from the *Convexity* of the Earth, which bounds the *Horizon*, and admits of no such unlimited Prospect; so that all he cou'd be presum'd capable of doing in this Case (as our Saviour was not insensible what he did do) was to make *fictitious Representations* of gay and magnificent Things in the Air.

SECONDLY, The other Way, wherein the Devil may be suppos'd able to assist these Magicians, is, by making use of the *Laws of Nature*, in producing Effects, which are not above the natural Power

(x) *Patrick's* Commentary in Locum.  
(a) *Matt.* iv. 8.

(y) 2 *Tim.* iii. 8.

(z) *Præpar. Evang.* l. 9. c. 8.



A. M.  
2433, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1571, &c.

Power of Things, though they certainly exceed what Man can do. Thus, to transport a Body, with inconceivable Rapidity, from one Place to another; to bring together different Productions of Nature, which *separately* have no visible Effect, but, when *united*, work Wonders; to make Images move, walk, speak, and the like; these may come within the Compass of the Devil's Power, because not transcending the *Laws of Nature*, though we cannot discern by what Means they are effected.

*THIRDLY*, There is a farther Supposition (*b*) of some learned Men, *viz.* that, under the divine Permission, wicked Spirits have a Power to work *real* Miracles, of which they perceive (*c*) some Intimations given us in Scripture, and, in the Nature of the Thing, no Reasons to the contrary; and therefore the Question is, whether, what the Magicians here perform'd, were *real* Miracles, or not?

That their Miracles were real.

SOME learned Writers have imagin'd, that there was not any real Transmutation, when the Rods of the *Egyptian* Magicians were pretended to be chang'd into Serpents, nor any real Miracle exhibited, when the Water was turn'd into Blood, and the Frogs produc'd; but, that either the *Magicians* play'd their Parts well, as dexterous Jugglers, or that they did it by their Knowledge of some secret Art; or that some *Dæmons* assisted them, who, by their Power over the *Air*, enabled them to \* deceive the Sight of the Beholders. It is to be observ'd however, that, in the

Account, which *Moses* gives us of the Miracles perform'd by himself and *Aaron*, and of what the *Magicians* did by their *Inchantments*, he does not hint any Manner of Difference, as to the *Reality* of the Performances of either of them. In the Case of their Rods being turn'd into Serpents, he does not say, that they made them to *appear* to be such, by a Deception of the Sight, but that (*d*) *they flung down every Man his Rod, and they became Serpents*; and so, of the other two Miracles, which *Moses* exhibited, *that the Magicians did so with their Inchantments*. (*e*) Now, from the Knowledge of *natural Causes and Effects*, which, by the Help of *Experiment* and *Philosophy*, has, of late, been introduc'd, we may venture to say, that no Effects, like what these Men pretended to accomplish by *Inchantments*, can be produc'd by any, or all the *Powers of Nature*. No Art, no Study of *occult Sciences*, can enable a Man *really* to change a Rod into a living Serpent. There are no *Inchantments*, no Rules in Sorcery sufficient to make a living Frog, or to change Water into real Blood; and to suppose that the Magicians went about to impose upon *Pharaoh*, and the rest of the Spectators, by mere *Artifice*, and Slight of Hand, was giving *Moses* and *Aaron* (whom we cannot but suppose *inquisitive* upon this Occasion) the fairest Opportunity imaginable to detect the Cheat, and expose them to the Contempt, and Derision of the whole Company.

From Exod. i. to Chap. xiii.

#### THEIR

(b) *Stillingfleet's* Orig. Sacre, p. 236. *Le Clerc's* Comment.

(c) Deut. xiii. 1. Matt. xxiv. 24. 2 Thess. ii. 9.

\* The *Mahometans*, in the Account they give us of these Transactions, seem to think them *Legerdemain* Tricks, rather than any *real* Miracles in the Magicians; for they tell us, that *Moses* having wrought some Miracles before the King of *Egypt*, which not a little surpris'd him, he was advis'd by his Council to amuse him with fair Hopes, until he had sent for some of his most expert Sorcerers from *Thebais*. Accordingly *Sabour* and *Gadour*, two Brothers, renowned for their *Magick Skill*, were sent for; but, before they came to *Pharaoh's* Court, they went to consult the *Manes* of their Father about the Success of their Journey; acquainting him withal, that the two Magicians, which they were sent for to oppose, had a *Rod*, which they turn'd into a Serpent, and devour'd all that made head against it: To which their Father's Ghost answer'd, that, if that Rod turn'd itself into a Serpent, whilst they were asleep, they must never expect to prevail against them. However, this did not hinder them from appearing before *Pharaoh*, at the Head of his other *Magicians*, to the Number (as some say) of 70,000. All these had prepar'd their Rods, and Cords fill'd with *Quicksilver*, which being heated by the Sun, imitated the winding of a Serpent; but *Moses's* Serpent soon destroy'd them, to the great Surprize of all the Spectators: Whereupon *Sabour* and *Gadour* renounc'd their Profession, and embrac'd the Religion of *Moses*, which gave *Pharaoh* such a Disgust, that he had them both put to death, as holding secret Correspondence with *Moses*. *Herbelot's* Biblioth. Orient. p. 648, and *Calmer's* Dictionary, under the Word *Jannes*.

(d) Exod. vii. 11, 12.

(e) *Shuckford's* Connection, Vol. II. l. 9.



A. M.  
2433, *Esc.*  
Ant. Christ.  
1571, *Esc.*

THEIR only Recourse, in this Case, can be to the Assistance of *Devils*, deluding the Company with false *Appearances* of Serpents, Frogs, and Blood : But let one try to give a satisfactory Account, how any *Magician* cou'd, by his Power over the *Air*, either by himself, or by the Assistance of a *Dæmon*, represent to the naked View of Beholders, in Opposition to a true Miracle, Serpents, Frogs, and Water converted into Blood ; nay, and so represent them, as that the *fictitious* Appearances shou'd not be distinguishable from the *real*, but shou'd bear to be seen with them, at one and the same Time, in the same Light, in the same View (for so the Magicians *Rods*, turn'd into *Serpents*, certainly were, when *Aaron's* Rod swallow'd them up) : I say, let any one try to give a reasonable Account of this Fancy, and he will quickly see, that he may more reasonably suppose, the Magicians able to perform a true and real Transmutation, than to ascribe to them such *imaginary* Powers, as this Supposition requires, and which, (if they cou'd be conceiv'd) can tend only to destroy the Certainty of all Appearances whatever.

But not of  
their own pro-  
ducing.

IF then the Magicians cou'd have no Knowledge of any *mystick Arts*, or Powers of Nature, whereby to work Miracles ; if they cou'd not deceive the Spectators by any *Slight of Hand*, nor obtain any Assistance from *evil Spirits*, sufficient to impose upon them by *false Appearances* ; the Consequence seems to be, that the Miracles, which they wrought, were equally true with those which *Moses* and *Aaron* did. But then, as the *Magicians* had no Power inherent in themselves, they cou'd not tell, even when they set about imitating *Moses*, what the Success of their Attempt wou'd be. Their *Rods* were turn'd into Serpents, they saw, but how that was effected, they cou'd not tell. Had they had any certain Rules of Art or Science to work by, or any superior Help and Assistance to depend on, they wou'd, at once, have known what to attempt, and what

not, and not have expos'd themselves to Scorn, by not being able to produce *Lice*, as well as *Frogs*. If, what they did, was by the Agency of evil Spirits, it is plain, that that Agency was under the divine Controul, and cou'd go no farther, than the God of *Israel* permitted it ; and the Reasons of his permitting it might be these :

From Exod.  
i. to Chap.  
xiii.

THE Learned in *Egypt* thought, that *Miracles*, *Prodigies*, and *Omens*, were given by the *planetary* and *elementary* Influences ; and that Students, deeply vers'd in the *Mysteries* of Nature, cou'd cause them by *Art* and *Incantation*. *Pharaoh* might possibly be of this Opinion ; and therefore, seeing *Moses* do very strange Things, and knowing that his *Magicians* were great *Adepts* in these Sciences, he thought proper to send for them, in order to know, whether the Wonders, which *Moses* wrought, were the Effect of the Art of Man, of the Power of Nature, or of the Finger of God ; for he seems to have argu'd thus. — If his *Magicians* cou'd perform what *Moses* did, *Moses* was such an one as they, and endeavour'd to delude him with *artificial* Wonders, instead of real Miracles. Fit, therefore, it was, that these *Practitioners* shou'd be suffer'd to exert the utmost of their Power against *Moses*, in order to clear him from the Imputation of Magick, or Sorcery, which (considering the prevailing Notions of that Age) both *Hebrews* and *Egyptians* might have been apt to entertain, had not this Competition happen'd, and his *Antagonists* thereupon acknowledg'd the Superiority of the *Principle*, by which he acted, in Comparison of which, all their Arts, and Knowledge of *occult Sciences* prevail'd nothing.

Why Pharaoh  
sent for his  
Magicians,  
and why God  
suffer'd them  
to work Won-  
ders.

THE *Israelites*, it must be own'd, were a People of a very suspicious, diffident, and desponding Temper. When *Moses* came to them with a Message from God, at first they seem'd to receive him gladly, and to rejoice at their approaching Deliverance ; and when he had shewn them the



A. M.  
2133, &c.  
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*Credentials*, which God appointed him to exhibit, it is said, (f) *that the People believed, and, when they heard that the Lord had looked upon their Affliction, they bowed their Heads, and worshipped*: But, within the Space of a Day or two, when they saw that every *Thing* did not answer their Expectation, but that their Petition to an imperious Tyrant was rejected with Scorn; how is their Tone chang'd to their very Deliverers, and the Blame of all their Grievances laid upon them! (g) *The Lord look upon you, and judge, because you have made our Savour to be abhorred in the Eyes of Pharaoh, and in the Eyes of his Servants, to put a Sword into their Hands to slay us*: And therefore, for the Confirmation of the Faith of these wavering and uncertain People, it was highly necessary, that this Contest between *Moses* and the *Magicians* shou'd be permitted, that the Disparity of Persons, acting by the Power of *God*, and by the Power of *Satan*, in such a Contraposition, might be more conspicuous.

AND indeed, what cou'd more contribute to raise in the *Israelites* a Confidence in *God's* Promises, and a joyful Hope of a speedy Deliverance, than to see the great Disparity between the *Opposers* and *Maintainers* of their Cause? To see, I say, that tho', by the divine Permission, the *Magicians* cou'd change their Rods into Serpents, yet, as a manifest Token of Superiority, *Moses's* Rod devour'd all theirs; tho' they cou'd turn Water into *Blood*, yet it was above their Skill to restore it to its former Nature; though they made a Shift to produce *Frogs*, yet they were utterly unable to clear the *Egyptian* Palaces and Houses of them; though they did, in short, some Things, which only contributed to the Calamities of *Egypt*, yet they cou'd do no one Thing to redress them, nor even to relieve themselves against the Plague of the *Boils*? So true, and so severe withal, is that Observation of the Author of the *Book of Wisdom*: (h) *As for the Illu-*

*sion of Art-Magick, they were put down, and their Vaunting in Wisdom was reprov'd with Disgrace; for they, who promised to drive away Terrors, and Troubles from a sick Soul, were sick themselves of Fear, and worthy to be laughed at.*

From Exod.  
i. to Chap.  
xiii.

BUT now *Moses* not only does such Miracles, as the *Magicians* never pretend to, (the Storm and Hail, the Thunder and Lightning, and thick Darkeness, &c. they never once attempted to imitate) but, (supposing that *Pharaoh* might be addicted to *Astrologers*, who fancy'd that all Things here below might be govern'd by the Motion and Influence of the *Stars*) he very frequently gives him the Liberty to name the Time, when he wou'd have any Plague remov'd, that thereby he might know, that *God* alone was the Author of them, and that, consequently, there was no Day or Hour, under so ill an *Aspect*, but that he cou'd prevail with him, at whatever Moment he shou'd assign, to rescue and deliver him.

HAD *Moses* met with no Opposition in working his Miracles, *Pharaoh* had neither had so strong a Conviction, nor cou'd *Moses* himself here have exhibited so clear a Testimony of his divine Mission. (i) As the Nature of the *Egyptian* Learning then was, the King might have suspected that the *Prophet's* Miracles proceeded, if not from *natural* Means and *Inchantments*, at least from the Influence of some *planetary* or *elementary* Powers: But when Men, of equal Skill and Abilities in all Points of *abstruse* Learning, were brought to contest the Matter with him, and acknowledg'd their Inability to proceed in a Conflict, where their Adversary had a divine Power apparently assisting him; this establish'd the Truth of *Moses's* Pretensions, though it made the others *Obstinacy* and *Infidelity* inexcusable; and (k) a signal Instance of *God's* Wisdom it was, to permit these *Sorcerers* to proceed, for some Time, in their Contest with his Servant, which added Disgrace to the one's Defeat,

(f) Exod. iv. 31.  
Vol. II. l. 9.

(g) Exod. v. 21.  
(h) *Stillfleet's* Origin. Sacrae.

(i) *Wisdom* xvii. 7, 8.

(j) *Shuckford's* Connection,



A. M.  
2433, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1571, &c.

Defeat, as it did no small Glory to the other's Conquest.

THUS we have endeavour'd to satisfy the Objections, which are usually advanc'd against some Parts of the *Scripture History* compris'd in this *Period*; and, for the farther Satisfaction of our Reader, shall conclude with the Testimony of some Heathen Writers, who, in all Ages, have, more or less, taken Notice of the Birth, Life, and several Adventures of *Moses*, so far as we have hitherto advanc'd: (*l*) That his being taken out of the River *Nile*, for Instance, is sung by the Author of the *Orphick Verses*, under the Title *υδολαμς*, or *born of the Water*: That the Beauty and Gracefulness of his Person, which recommended him to every one's Affection, is remember'd by *Justin* (*m*) out of *Trogus Pompeius*, and that (*n*) the whole Fable of *Venus* falling in Love with *Adonis*, in all Probability, arose from the Story of *Moses* and *Pharaoh's* Daughter: That the Wonder of the *Burning Bush* is recorded by *Antiphanus*, with a small Variation, as he is cited (*o*) by *Eusebius*: That several of the Plagues upon *Egypt* are mention'd in the Fragments of *Eupolemus*, preserv'd (*p*) by

the same *Eusebius*; and that the Slaughter of their *First-born*, in particular, is commemorated in that mournful Feast of *Osiris*, wherein they rise at Midnight, light Candles, and go about weeping and groaning: That *Moses's* calling the God of Heaven, *Jao*, or *Jehovah*, is mention'd (*q*) by *Diodorus Siculus*: That the Names of *Jannes* and *Jambres*, and the Opposition they made against him, is preserv'd (*r*) in *Eumenius*, (*s*) *Pliny*, and (*t*) *Apuleius*; and (to go no farther) that the *Israelites* Departure out of *Egypt*, and Settling in the Land of *Canaan*, is (*u*) by *Tacitus*, who took it from some *Egyptian* Authors, thus related. "The *Hebrews* were descended from the *Assyrians*, and, possessing a great Part of *Egypt*, led the Life of *Shepherds*; but afterwards being burthen'd with hard Labour, they came out of *Egypt* under the Command of *Moses*, with some *Egyptians* accompanying them, and went through the Country of the *Arabians*, into *Palestine* *Syria*, and there set up Rites contrary to those of the *Egyptians*." So fully does the Testimony of *Aliens* tend to the Confirmation of thy *Revelations*, O God!

From Exod.  
1. to Chap.  
xiii.

(*l*) *Eusebius's* Præp. Evang. 1. 13. c. 12.

4. c. 3.  
1. 8. c. 8.

(*o*) *Eusebius's* Præp. Evang. 1. 9. c. 22.

(*j*) Lib. 30. c. 1.

(*t*) Apolog. 2.

(*m*) Lib. 36. c. 2.

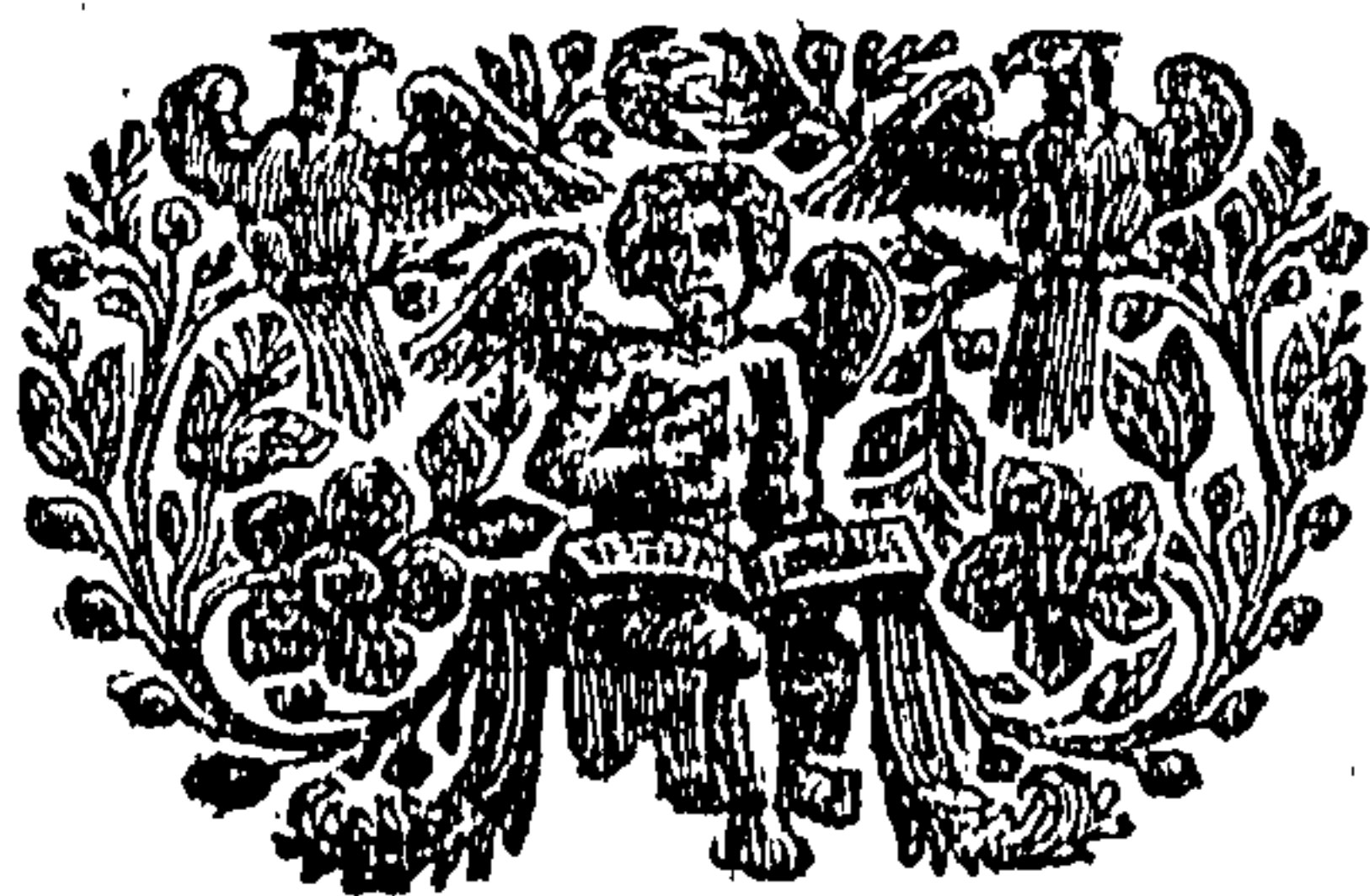
(*p*) Ibid.

(*u*) Lib. 5.

(*n*) *Hættius's* Dém. Evang. Prop.

(*q*) Lib. 1.

(*r*) *Eusebius*,





A. M.  
2433, &c.  
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i. to Chap.  
xiii.

## DISSERTATION V.

*Of the sacred Chronology, and prophane History, Learning, Religion, Idolatry, and monumental Works, &c. but chiefly of the Egyptians, during this Period.*

Chronologi-  
cal Differences  
settled.

**B**EFORE we enter upon the *historical* Matters which are contain'd in this *Period*, between God's Call to *Abraham* out of *Mesopotamia*, and the Children of *Israel*'s Departure out of *Egypt*, it may not be improper to settle its *Chronology*, and to take Notice of some *Exceptions*, that may possibly be made to it.

THE Difference, between the *Hebrew*, *Samaritan*, and *Septuagint* Computations, in the former Periods of Time, ran wide; and it was some Part of our Care, either to determine which was most probably in the right, or to reconcile the seeming *Opposition* between them: But in *this*, the *Variation* is so small, that they seem almost unanimously to agree, that, (x) from the Promise made to *Abraham*, to his Posterity's *Exodus* out of *Egypt*, are 430 Years, which (according to the learned *Usher*) may very properly be divided into two *Halves*.

1. (y) FROM the Time of the Promise, when *Abraham* was in the 75th Year of his Age, to the Birth of *Isaac*, are 25 Years; (z) from the Birth of *Isaac*, to the Birth of *Jacob*, 60 Years; from the Birth of *Jacob*, to his Descent into *Egypt*, with his whole Family, 130 Years; so that the whole of this Division amounts to 215 Years.

2. THE other Part of the Division is thus reckon'd up. *Joseph*, the Son of *Jacob*, was 30 Years old, when he expounded *Pharaoh*'s Dreams: The seven Years of Plenty were run out, and (a) the third Year of Famine begun, when

his Father came down into *Egypt*: So that, by this Time, *Joseph* was 39. Now 39 Years taken from the 110, which *Joseph* liv'd, will make the Time, which the *Israelites* had continu'd in *Egypt*, before *Joseph*'s Death, to be 71: And, as (b) from the Death of *Joseph*, to the Birth of *Moses*, are precisely 64 Years; so, (c) from his Birth, to the Time of the *Israelites* Departure, are 80 Years. The several Articles of this Division therefore, being put together, amount, in like Manner, to 215 Years; and the two gross Sums make exactly 430.

THE History indeed tells us, that (d) the Sojourning of the Children of *Israel*, who dwelt in *Egypt*, was Four hundred and thirty Years; but it does not therefore follow, that they dwelt in *Egypt* all that Time. They came into *Egypt* with *Jacob*, A. M. 2298, and went out of *Egypt*, A. M. 2513; so that they liv'd in it just two hundred and fifteen Years. Their Sojourning therefore must not be limited to their living in *Egypt*, but be taken in a more general Sense, and extended equally to the Time of their living in *Canaan*, which being added to the Time of their Continuance in *Egypt*, makes exactly the Number of Four hundred and thirty Years.

THAT this is the Sense of the divine Historian is manifest from the Authority of the *Samaritan* Text, which has the whole Verse thus: *Now the inhabiting of the Children of Israel, and their Fathers whereby they inhabited in the Land of Canaan, and in the Land of Egypt, were Four*

(v) Exod. xii. 40.

(y) Gen. xii. 4.—xxi. 5.

(z) Gen. xxv. 26.

(a) Gen. xlvii. 4.

(b) Compare Gen. xli. 46. with xlv. 6.

(c) Exod. vii. 7.

(d) Exod. xii. 40.



A. M. 2433, *Æc.*  
Ant. Christ. 1571, *Æc.*

*Four hundred and thirty Years*, whereupon the learned Dr *Prideaux* (e) has this Observation, "That the Additions herein do manifestly mend the Text; they make it more clear and intelligible, and add nothing to the *Hebrew* Copy, but what must be understood by the Reader to make out its Sense." And upon this Presumption it may very reasonably be suppos'd, (f) that the antient *Hebrew* Text was, in this Verse, the same with the present *Samaritan*, and that the Words, which the *Samaritan* has, in this Place, more than the *Hebrew*, have been dropp'd by the Negligence of some Transcribers.

AGAIN, in the Promise, which God makes to *Abraham*, he tells him, (g) *that his Seed shou'd be a Stranger in a Land, which was not theirs; that there they should serve the Inhabitants, and they afflict them for Four hundred Years; but that, in the fourth Generation, they should return to Canaan again; whereas Four hundred Years are not the Number specified in the Place just now examin'd, nor are four Generations equivalent to the Space of Time, wherein the Hebrews sojourn'd in strange Countries. It is to be observ'd however, that, both in sacred and prophane Authors, a common Thing it is, to mention only the large Sum, and drop the less, especially when (to preserve the Exactness of Chronology) the precise Number is, in other Places, inserted: And that tho' a Generation does usually denote a Term of an hundred Years; yet taking the Words to relate to the whole Sojourning of the Hebrews, from their going into Canaan, to their going out of Egypt, the odd Number of*

30 Years may here be suppos'd to be omitted, to make it a round Sum, as well as in the former Sense: But then, taking a Generation to mean no more than one Descent, the Matter of Fact is, that from the *Israelites* going down into *Egypt*, until the Time of their leaving it, in some of the Sons of *Jacob* (particularly in *Levi*, who begat *Cobath*, and *Cobath*, *Amram*, and *Amram*, *Moses*, who conducted the People out of *Egypt*) there were no more than four Descents.

WHETHER therefore we take the Word *Generation* to denote an *Age of Years*, or a *Succession of Lives*, there is plainly no Incongruity in the Expression; because (bating the odd Number of *Thirty*) *Abraham*, and his Posterity, sojourn'd in a strange Land for the Space of Four hundred Years; and yet (allowing it to be meant of a Descent of Lives) at the *Israelites* Return towards *Canaan*, from the Time of their going down into *Egypt*, several Persons of the fourth Generation were not extinct.

EGYPT indeed was the most considerable Nation, with whom the *Israelites* had any Intercourse during this Period: What Dealings they had with the several Parts of *Canaan*, will best be related, when we come to treat of the History of that Country. In the mean Time, we cannot but lament our Want of the antient Records of those Times, which forces us, instead of a continu'd History, to present our Reader with Nothing, but a jejune Catalogue of the *Egyptian* Kings, which, as far as they relate to our present Purpose, we have thought proper \* to subjoin at the Bottom of the Page; and shall only take

From Exod. i. to Chap. xiii.

The Egyptian History.

6 D

Notice

(e) Connection, Vol. II. Part i. l. 6. p. 600. xv. 13, 16.

(f) Shuckford's Connection, Vol. II. l. 9.

(g) Gen.

\* In the Year of the World 1849, reign'd, in *Thebais*, or the *Upper Egypt*, *Menes* (whom the Scripture calls *Mizraim*) 62 Years: In the Year 1911, *Atbothes*, 59 Years: In the Year 1970, *Atbothes* II, 32 Years: In the Year 2002, *Dialies*, 19 Years: In the Year 2021, *Pemphas*, 18 Years: In the Year 2039, *Tegar Amachus*, 79 Years: In the Year 2118, *Stoechus*, 6 Years: In the Year 2124, *Gosermies*, 30 Years: In the Year 2154, *Mares*, 26 Years.

In the Time of these, flourish'd the *Royal Shepherds* in the *Lower Egypt*; and, in the Year of the World 1920, *Salatis*, the first pastoral King, reign'd 19 Years: In the Year 1939, *Beon*, the second pastoral King, 44 Years: In the Year 1983, *Apachnas*, the third pastoral King, 36 Years: In the Year 2020, *Apophis*, the fourth pastoral King, 61 Years: In the Year 2081, *Jantus*, the fifth pastoral King, 50 Years and one Month; and after these *Herules Aflis*, 49 Years, and two Months.

Then



A. M.  
2433, &c.  
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1571, &c.

Notice here in particular, that A. M. 2084, when *Abraham*, and his Nephew *Lot*, went down into *Egypt*, *Tegar Amachus* was then upon the Throne; that A. M. 2260, when *Joseph* was born, *Biyris* was King, and when he was sold into *Egypt*, about 17 Years after, *Saophis* had succeeded; that this *Saophis* was the Prince, whose Dreams he expounded, and by whom he was promoted to great Honour in the Kingdom; that he dy'd however before his Dreams were accomplish'd, for it was A. M. 2298, that the first Year of the Famine began, when *Sensoaphis*, (who was probably his Son, and held *Joseph* in equal Favour) sway'd the Sceptre; that this was the Prince, to whom *Jacob* and his Sons, upon their coming down into *Egypt*, in the third Year of the Famine, were presented, and with whom *Israel* had the Conversation above-mention'd; that A. M. 2369, when *Joseph* dy'd, *Masthis* was King, by whom, and some of his Successors, the *Israelites* were well treated, in Remembrance of the Services, he had done the Publick, until there happen'd a Revolution in the Government, which some chuse to place about this Time; that A. M. 2427, the *Israelites* began to be oppress'd, and severely treated by *Rameffes Miamun*, in whose Reign *Moses* was born, flew the *Egyptian*, and fled into *Midian*; that A. M. 2493, *Ame-*

*nophis* succeeded his Father in his Kingdom, and in his Cruelty to the *Israelites*; but that, being compell'd, at last, by the mighty Hand of God, to let them go, he, and all his Army, in endeavouring to retake them, were, A. M. 2513, swallow'd up in the *Red-Sea*.

*SALATIS*, and his Successors, not only oppress'd the *Israelites*, as we said before, but, by the Violence of their Conquests, so terrify'd the antient Inhabitants of the Land, that many Persons of the first Figure thought it better to leave their native Country, than to endeavour to sit down under such Calamities, as they saw were coming upon them. *Cecrops*, about this Time, departed from *Egypt*; and, after some Years Travel in other Places, came, at length, to *Greece*, and liv'd in *Attica*, where he was kindly receiv'd by *Actæus*, the King of the Country; marry'd his Daughter; and, upon his Demise, succeeded to his Throne; and thereupon he taught the People (who were *vagrant* before) the Use of settled Habitations; restrain'd all licentious Lust among them; oblig'd each Man to marry one Wife; and, in short, gave them wise Rules for the Conduct of their Lives, and the Exercise of all civil and religious Offices. About thirty Years after the Death of *Cecrops*, *Cadmus* \* came, either directly from *Egypt* (as some think,) or rather from

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The Expulsion  
of several of  
the Natives,  
and their Set-  
tlements.

Then follow the *Theban* Kings, in this Order: In the Year of the World 2180, *Amophes* (who, by Archbishop *Usher*, is nam'd *Tethmosis*, and is said to have expell'd the Royal *Shepherds*) reign'd 20 Years: In the Year 2200, *Siricius*, 18 Years: In the Year 2218, *Cneubus Cneurus*, 27 Years: In the Year 2245, *Ravossis*, 13 Years: In the Year 2258, *Biyris*, 10 Years: In the Year 2268, *Saophis*, 29 Years: In the Year 2297, *Sensoaphis*, 27 Years: In the Year 2324, *Moscheris*, 31 Years: In the Year 2355, *Masthis*, 33 Years: In the Year 2388, *Pannus Archadnes* (whom *Usher* calls *Ratholis*) 35 Years; and in the Year 2423, *Apaxus Maximus*, 100 Years.

After the Expulsion of the Race of the Royal Pastors, in the Year of the World 2205, *Chebron* succeeded to the Kingdom of the Lower *Egypt*, and reign'd 13 Years: In the Year 2218, *Amenophis*, 20 Years, and 7 Months: In the Year 2239, *Amefes*, 21 Years, and 9 Months: In the Year 2261, *Mephres*, 12 Years, and 9 Months: In the Year 2273, *Misphragmuthis*, 25 Years, and 10 Months: In the Year 2299, *Thmosis*, 9 Years, and 8 Months: In the Year 2309, *Amenophis* II, 30 Years, and 10 Months: In the Year 2340, *Orus*, 36 Years, and 5 Months: In the Year 2376, *Acencheres*, 12 Years, and 1 Month: In the Year 2410, *Acencheres* II, 12 Years, and 3 Months: In the Year 2422, *Acmais*, 4 Years, and 1 Month: In the Year 2426, *Rameffes*, 1 Year, and 3 Months: In the Year 2427, *Rameffes Miamun*, 66 Years, and 2 Months: And in the Year 2493, *Amenophis* III, 19 Years, and 6 Months, who is the last we meet with in this Period.

\* The true Account of *Cadmus* is, — That his Father, whose Name is unknown, was an *Egyptian*, who left *Egypt* about the Time, that *Cecrops* came from thence, and obtain'd a Kingdom in *Phœnicia*, as *Cecrops* did in *Attica*; and, that his two Sons, *Phœnix* and *Cadmus*, were born after his Settlement in that Country: And hence it came to pass, that *Cadmus*, having had an *Egyptian* Father, was brought up in the Religion, and was well acquainted with the History of that Country, which occasion'd several Writers of his Life to account him an *Egyptian*; and, at the same Time, being born and educated in *Phœnicia*, he became Master of the Language and Letters of the Country, and had



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from *Phœnicia*, (as others will have it) and, with several People, that follow'd his Fortune, († of which some Authors give us a *strange* Account) having expell'd the antient Inhabitants, settled himself in *Beotia*, and built *Thebes*.

*DANAUS* was another considerable Person, who, about this Time, left *Egypt*, and came into *Greece*. He was originally descended from a *Grecian* Ancestor, and, being now at *Argos*, when the Crown was vacant, he stood *Candidate* for it against *Galenor*, the Son of *Sthenelus*, and, † by the Superstition of the People, who were his Electors, carry'd it. But, of all the *Refugees*, who quitted *Egypt* much about this Time, *Belus*, the Son of *Neptune*, seems to be the most famous. He, with some *Egyptian* Priests, went to *Babylon*, and there obtain'd Leave to settle, and cultivate their Studies, in the same Manner, and with the same Encouragement, that had been granted them in their own Country.

THE chief Aim of the antient *Astronomers* seems to have been, to observe the Times of the Rising and Setting of the Stars; and the first and most proper Places, that they cou'd think of for that Purpose, were very large and open Plains, where they cou'd have an extensive View of the

Horizon, without Interruption; and such Plains, as these, were the *Observatories* for many Generations. But the *Egyptians* had, for above three hundred Years before the Time of this *Belus*, invented a Method to improve their Views by the Building of Pyramids, from the Top of which they might take a Prospect with greater Advantage; and therefore it is no improbable Conjecture, that *Belus* taught the *Babylonians* the Use of such Structures, and might possibly project for them that lofty Tower, which was afterwards call'd by his Name.

FOR this Tower seems to have been an Improvement of the *Egyptian* Pyramids. It was rais'd to a much greater Height; had a more commodious Space at Top; more useful and large Apartments within; and yet was a less bulky Building, and rais'd upon a narrower Foundation: So that the Contriver of this seems to have been well acquainted with the *Egyptian Pyramid*, and its Defects, and to have herein design'd a Structure much more excellent, which can be ascrib'd to none, with so great a Shew of Probability, as to the *Belus*, we are now speaking of.

THAT the *Egyptians*, in the early Ages of the World, were very famous for Wisdom and Learning, is evident from many antient

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The Learning  
of the EGYPTIANS.

had likewise a *Phœnician* Name, which has induc'd several others, that have wrote of him, to conclude, with good Reason, that he was a Native of that Country. *Shuckford's Connection*, Vol. II. l. 8.

† The Account which *Ovid* (in his *Metamorphoses*, lib. iii. fab. i.) gives us of this Matter, is, — That *Cadmus's* Followers were all devour'd by a *Serpent*, which when *Cadmus* had kill'd, and sown its Teeth in the Ground, there sprang up from them a Number of arm'd Men, who, as soon as they appear'd above Ground, fell a fighting one another, and were all kill'd, except five, who, surviving the Conflict, went with *Cadmus*, and help'd him to build *Thebes*. And the *Mythologick* Sense of all this Story, according to the Conjecture of a learned Author, is no more than this — That when *Cadmus* came into *Beotia*, and had conquer'd the Inhabitants of it, it might be recorded of him in the *Phœnician*, or *Hebrew* Language (which anciently was the same) that he *Nasab Chail Chamest Anshim, Noshkim be Shenei Nachash*; but now there being several Ambiguities in these Words, where the Vowels were not originally written, (*Chamest*, for Instance, may signify *five*, as well as *warlike*; *Shenei*, Teeth, as well as *Spears*; and *Nachash*, a *Serpent*, as well as *Brass*) a fabulous Translator might say, *he rais'd a Force of five Men, arm'd from the Teeth of a Serpent*. Whereas the Words shou'd be render'd, *he rais'd a warlike Force of Men, arm'd with Spears of Brass*; and it is no Wonder that the *Greeks*, who were so fond of disguising all their antient Accounts with *Fable* and *Allgory*, shou'd give the History of *Cadmus* this Turn, when the Words, in which his Actions are recorded, gave them so fair an Opportunity. *Shuckford's Connection*, Vol. II. l. 8.

† The Dispute between *Cadmus* and *Galenor*, concerning their Titles to the Crown, was argu'd, on both Sides, for a whole Day; and when *Galenor* was thought to have offer'd as weighty and strong Arguments for his Pretensions, as *Danaus* cou'd for his, the next Day was appointed for the further hearing, and determining their Claims, when an Accident put an End to the Dispute. For, not far from the Place, where the People were assembled, there happen'd a Fight between a *Wolf* and a *Bull*, wherein the *Wolf* got the better. This was thought a Thing not a little ominous; and therefore, as the *Wolf* was a Creature they were less acquainted with, than the *Bull*, they thought it was the Will of the Gods, declar'd by the Event of this accidental Combat, that he, who was the *Stranger*, shou'd rule over them. *Shuckford's Connection*, Vol. II. l. 8.



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antient Writers, as well as the Testimony of the Scriptures themselves; for when, among other Things, to the Honour of *Moses*, it is said, that (b) *he was learned in all the Wisdom of the Egyptians*; and, to magnify the Knowledge of *Solomon*, we are told, that (i) *he excelled all the Wisdom of Egypt*; we cannot but infer, that this Nation, above all others, had gain'd a Reputation, even for the Invention of several useful Sciences.

Their Astro-  
nomy and Ge-  
ometry.

THE Tillage of the Ground made the Study of *Astronomy* absolutely necessary, in order to their knowing, from the *Lights of Heaven*, the Times and Seasons for the several Parts of *Agriculture*; and the Nature of their Country, overflow'd every Year by the *Nile*, and every Year losing its Land-Marks, made it of continual Use to them to study *Geometry*; and (as a necessary *Handmaid* to that) to make themselves expert in *Arithmetick*.

IT is not to be suppos'd however, that, hitherto, they had carry'd the Study either of *Astronomy* or *Geography* to any great Height. They observ'd the *Places* of the Stars, and the *periodical* Motions of the *Planets*. They kept *Registers* of their Observations for a long Course of Years, and took Account of the Weather and Seasons, that follow'd their several Observations. They recorded the Times of sowing and reaping this or that Grain, and, by their long Experience, became able *Prognosticators* of the Weather, and the Seasons, and excellent Directors for the Tillage of

the Ground: And, in like Manner, by their Knowledge in *Geometry*, they contriv'd very proper Methods of marking out, and describing the several Parts of their Country, and were very careful, no doubt, in making *Draughts* of the *Flow* and *Ebb* of their River *Nile* every Year; but when it is consider'd, that the *Egyptians* did not as yet apprehend, that the Year consisted of more than 360 Days; and that \* both *Thales* and *Pythagoras*, many Ages after these Times, made great Improvements in *Geometry* beyond what they had learn'd in *Egypt*; that *Thales* was the first, who ventur'd to foretel an *Eclipse*; and *Eudoxus* and *Ptolemy*, to reduce the heavenly Motions into *Tables*; we can hardly think, that either *Astronomy* or *Geometry* were, as yet, carry'd to any great Perfection.

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THE Science of *Physick* is generally imputed to *Æsculapius*, which Name was given to *Sethborthrus* (a King of *Memphis*, who stands second in the third *Dynasty* of *Manetho*) for his great Skill in that Art: And, tho' no great Credit is to be given to † their boasted Proficiency in *Chymistry*, yet it is reasonable to believe, from their constant Practice of *Dissections*, that they cou'd not well fail of a competent Knowledge in *Anatomy*.

THE Science however, for which they were most famous, and for which indeed they valu'd themselves most, was *Magick*, though the whole Structure of it had no other Foundation, than a superstitious Belief

(b) Acts vii. 22

(i) 1 Kings iv. 30.

\* *Thales*, who travell'd into *Egypt* for the Sake of their Learning, after his Return home, sacrific'd an Ox to the Gods, for Joy, that he had hit on the Method of inscribing a *rectangle Triangle* within a Circle; and *Pythagoras*, no less than a whole *Hecatomb*, for his finding out the Proportion of the longest Side of a *Right-angled Triangle* to the other two, which is no more than a common Proposition of the first Book of *Euclid*; and yet these two Philosophers cou'd not have the Invention of these Things from the *Egyptians*, unless we suppose, either that the *Egyptians* did not teach them all that they knew, or that the Disciples conceal'd the Thing, and vainly arrogated to themselves what, in strict Truth, they had borrow'd from their Masters. *Diog. Laërt. in Pythag. & Thalete.*

† Some modern Assertors of the great Antiquity of *Chymistry*, tell us of a Medicine us'd only by the *Egyptian* Priests, and kept secret, even from most of the *Natives*, that is of Efficacy almost to do any Thing, but restore the Dead to Life again. This, say they, was the grand *Elixir*, or chymical Preparation, made with the *Philosophers-Stone*, the Invention of *Hermes*; by the Help of which, the *Egyptian* Kings were enabled to build the *Pyramids*, with the Treasures, which their *Pharmacees* afforded them: But these Fables are sufficiently confuted by the profound Silence of all Antiquity in this Matter. They are indeed built upon suspicious Authorities, uncertain Conjectures, and allegorical Interpretations of the fabulous Stories of the *Greeks*, which these Men will have to be *chymical* Secrets in Disguise; insomuch that they fancy, that the *golden Fleece*, which *Jason* fetch'd from *Colchis*, was only a Receipt to make the *Philosophers-Stone*; and that *Medea* restor'd *Æson's* Father to his Youth again, by the *Grand Elixir*. *Universal History*, l. i. c. 3. and *Hotton's* Reflections on antient and modern Learning, c. 9.



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lief of the great Influence, which heavenly Bodies are suppos'd to have upon this inferior World. To this Purpose they imagin'd, that the seven *Planets* govern'd the seven *Days* of the Week; and pretended, that, by a long Observation of the Motion of the celestial Bodies, they had obtain'd the Art of foreseeing future Events. They believ'd, in short, that the Sun, Moon, Stars, and Elements, were endu'd with *Intelligence*, and appointed by the supreme Deity to govern the World; and, though they acknowledg'd that God might, upon extraordinary Occasions, work Miracles, reveal his Will by audible Voices, Visions, Dreams, Prophecies, &c. yet they imagin'd also, that, generally speaking, Prodigies were caus'd, Oracles given, and Visions occasion'd in a natural Way, by the Observation, or Influence of the Courses of the Heavenly Bodies, or by the Operations of the Powers of Nature; and therefore they conceiv'd, that their learned *Professors* cou'd work Miracles, obtain Omens, and interpret Dreams, merely by their Skill in natural Knowledge, which, though strange and unaccountable to the *Vulgar*, was very obvious to Persons of Science and Philosophy.

IN later Ages indeed, and when the *Egyptians* began to worship their departed Princes, a Notion prevail'd, that *Spirits* or *Dæmons*, of a Nature superior to Men, were employ'd in the Government

of the World; and had their several Provinces appointed them by God. To this Honour they imagin'd that the Souls of departed *Heroes*, and extraordinary Persons, were admitted; and, for this Reason, they suppos'd, that they were not only endow'd with Powers far exceeding those of mortal Men, but had likewise Miracles, Visions, Oracles, and Omens, submitted to their Ministry and Direction; and, consequently, in all their Demands or Exigencies of this Kind, made them the Objects of their *Incantations* and *Prayers*.

THESE were some of the chief Arts and Sciences (for their Architecture, Painting, Sculpture, and Mechanicks of all Kinds, for which they were so justly famous, we have but just Room to mention) that flourish'd, at this Time, among the *Egyptians*: And we come now to observe a little, by what Means it was, that this Learning of theirs came to be preserv'd, and transmitted to Posterity.

THE *Egyptian* Language was certainly one of the most antient in the World: For, considering its *Structure* and *Constitution*, (\* wherein it widely differs from all *Oriental* and *European* Languages) it must needs be an *Original*, or Mother-Tongue, form'd at the Confusion of *Babel*. Their most antient Way of Writing was by *Hieroglyphical* Figures \* of various Animals, and Plants, the Parts of human Bodies,

How they preserv'd their Learning.

\* For the *Copts* neither decline their *Nouns*, nor conjugate their *Verbs* (not even those of foreign Extract) otherwise than by prefixing *Particles*, sometimes of one or more Syllables, and sometimes of a single Letter, which denote *Case*, *Gender*, *Number*, and *Person*, several of which are often join'd together in one Word, and the *primitive* Word usually plac'd last: So that the Difficulty of this Language consists in the incredible Combination of the Words and Particles, in the Change of the Vowels, in transposing the middle Part of the Word, and adding superfluous Letters, which it requires no small Labour and Skill to distinguish. *Wilkins's Dissert. de Lingua Coptica*, p. 120.

\* Of these there were three Kinds among the *Egyptians*, which seem to have more or less Art in them, according to the Period of their Invention. The 1st was, To make the principal Circumstance of the Subject stand for the whole. Thus, when they wou'd describe a Battle, or two Armies in Array, they parted two Hands, one holding a Shield, and the other a Bow: When a Tumult, or popular Insurrection — an armed Man casting Arrows, &c. When a Siege — a scaling Ladder. The 2d was, To put the Instrument of the Thing (whether real, or metaphorical) for the Thing itself. Thus an Eye, eminently plac'd, was design'd to represent God's Omniscience: An Eye and Sceptre — a Monarch; and a Ship and Pilot — the Governor of the Universe. The 3d was, To make one represent another, where there was perceiv'd any quaint Analogy, or Similitude, between the Representative and the Thing properly intended. Thus, the Universe was design'd by a Serpent in a Circle, whose variegated Spots, signify'd the Stars; and the rising of the Sun, by the two Eyes of a Crocodile, because they seem to emerge from his Head; a tyrannical King, was represented by an Eagle; and a cruel, or improvident Parent, by an Hawk. Thus, from the Nature of the Things themselves, or their Resemblance to something else, from the principal Circumstance of any Action, or the chief Instrument employ'd in doing it, *Hieroglyphics* at first seem to have been invented. But whether their Invention was prior to that of Letters, has been Matter of some Debate among the Learned; tho' one can hardly forbear thinking, that a Picture



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Bodies, and *mechanical* Instruments, for in these Things did the *Hieroglyphicks* both of the *Ethiopians* and *Egyptians* (whereof *Hermes* is said to have been the Inventor) most certainly consist: But, besides these, they made use likewise of *literal* Characters, whereof they had two Kinds, calling the one the *sacred Letters*, in which their publick Registers, and all Matters of an higher Nature were written; and the other, the *Vulgar*, which every one made use of in their common Business. But both these Characters are at present lost, unless they remain in some old *Inscriptions*, that are unintelligible, and cannot be decypher'd.

NOT only the *Egyptians*, but several other Nations us'd to preserve the Memory of Things by *Inscriptions* on Pillars. The *Columns of Hermes*, upon which he is said to have wrote all his Learning, are mention'd by several Writers of good Note; and from them, both the *Grecian* Philosophers, and *Egyptian* Historians are suppos'd to have taken many valuable Hints: But to these *Inscriptions* succeeded the *sacred Books*, which contain'd not only what related to the Worship of the Gods, and the Laws of the Kingdom; but *historical* Collections likewise, yea, and all Kind of *miscellaneous* and *philosophical* Matters of any Moment, which the Priests, or *sacred Scribes* were oblig'd to insert in these publick Registers, in order to be transmitted to Posterity.

Their Religion, and Idolatry.

A NATION, so renown'd for their Knowledge and Learning, and who had such certain Methods of preserving the Traditions of their Ancestors, might have kept the *original* Religion, one wou'd think, with more than ordinary *Purity*; at least, wou'd not have run into the same

Excess of Idolatry and *Polytheism*, that other People, at this Time, were so strangely addicted to: And yet, if we look a little into their History, we shall soon find more Corruption of this Kind among them, than in any other Nation. Some of their wiser Sort indeed, are said to have acknowledg'd one *supreme* God, the Maker and Ruler of the World, whom they sometimes call'd by the Name of *Osiris*, or *Seraphis*; sometimes by that of *Isis*; and, at other Times, by that of *Neith*, on whose Temple at *Sais* was the following remarkable Inscription, *I am all that has been, is, or shall be, and my Vail hath no Mortal yet uncover'd*. But tho' some Parts of *Egypt* might, at first, be free from all idolatrous Worship; yet, when the Humour once began to spread, it soon over-ran the whole Kingdom. The heavenly *Luminaries* were the first Objects of profane Adoration; and, in *Egypt*, the Sun and the Moon went under the Denomination of *Osiris* and *Isis*. After these, the Elements, and other Parts of Nature (such as *Vulcan*, meaning thereby the *Fire*; *Ceres*, the *Earth*; *Oceanus*, the *Water*; and *Minerva*, the *Air*;) were admitted into the Number of their *Deities*.

BUT, besides the *celestial*, they had terrestrial Gods likewise; for most of their Princes, who had merited well of the People, were, after their Death, *canoniz'd*, and invocated under the Names of *Sol*, *Saturnus*, *Rhea*, *Jupiter*, *Juno*, *Vulcanus*, *Vesta*, and *Mercurius*, which, according to *Diodorus*, were the eight first Hero-Gods, which the *Egyptians* worshipp'd. Nay (and what is scarce credible) they came at last to give divine Honours to several Animals, and that with so great a Variety, and Disagreement among themselves, that, except some of

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Character (as *Hieroglyphics* are) wou'd scarce be intelligible, unless Men cou'd be suppos'd to delineate the Forms and Pictures of Things more accurately, than can well be imagin'd: But even if that were granted, they wou'd at best have been but a very imperfect Character, since they cou'd only hit off the Idea of Things *visible*, and must therefore be defective in a Multitude of Signs, to express the full Meaning of a Man's Mind: For which Reason some have suppos'd, that even the *Egyptians* themselves were wont to intermingle Letters with *Hieroglyphics*, to fill up and connect Sentences, and to express Actions more fully, than Pictures were found to do. These *Hieroglyphics* were at first in common Use, but in Process of Time, were appropriated to sacred and religious Matters, and wrote and understood by the Priests only. *Warburton's Divine Legation*, Lib. iv. and *Shuckford's Connection*, Lib. viii.



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of the principal Deities, which were honour'd all the Kingdom over, there was, almost in every Town or Village, a different God; held in Veneration in one Place, and detested in the next, which often occasion'd bitter Animosities, and sometimes inveterate Quarrels, and dangerous Wars.

*The Reasons given for it.*

Now the Reason, why the *Egyptians* adopted such a Variety of Animals into the Number of their Gods, was not so much from any Consideration of their *Subserviency* to human Life, as from a certain Similitude, they perceiv'd between them, and the Deity to whom they were devoted. Thus the *Hawk* was made sacred to *Osiris*, as an Emblem of the supreme Deity, by Reason of its piercing Sight and Swiftness; the *Crocodile*, and *Sea-Horse*, were sacred to *Typho*; *Anubis* was said to be the Dog-star, and the Dog was sacred to him; the *Serpent* or *Dragon* was consecrated to *Nephthe*; and other suitable Animals, to their respective Gods: Nor is the Conjecture \* of our learned Countryman (a) at all to be rejected, viz. That the Use of the *hieroglyphical* Figures of Animals might introduce this strange Worship, which the *Egyptians*, in Process of Time, came to pay them. For, as those *Figures* were made choice of, according to the respective Properties of each Animal, to express the *Qualities* and *Dignities* of the Persons, they represented, which were generally their Gods, Princes, and great Men; the People became *gradually* accusom'd to

these Figures, which they us'd to place in their Temples, as the Images of their Deities; and from hence, it is not absurd to imagine, that they came at length to pay a superstitious Veneration to the living Animals themselves.

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BUT whatever might be the Reason or Inducements to this Kind of *Idolatry*, *And the Absurdity thereof.*

Nothing was so remarkable in the *Egyptian* Religion, as the preposterous Worship, which that Nation paid to Animals, such as the Cat, the Dog, the Ibis, the Wolf, the Crocodile, and several others, which they had in high Veneration, not when they were alive only, but even after they were dead.

WHILST they were living, they had Lands set apart for the Maintenance of each Kind, and both Men and Women were employ'd in feeding and attending them. The Children succeeded their Parents in the Office, which was so far from being declin'd, or thought despicable among the *Egyptians*, that they glory'd in it as an high Honour; and, wearing certain *Badges*, to distinguish them at a Distance, were saluted by bending the Knee, and other Demonstrations of Respect.

IF any Person kill'd any of these sacred Animals *designedly*, he was punish'd with immediate Death; if *involuntarily*, his Punishment was referr'd to the Discretion of the Priests; but if the Creature slain was a *Cat*, an *Hawk*, or an *Ibis*, (whether the Thing was done with Design or no) † the Person was to die without Mercy, and some-

\* This Conjecture the learned Author of the *Divine Legation of Moses* abundantly confirms: For, having enumerated the several Things, that might give Occasion to *Brute-Worship* among the *Egyptians*; such as, 1. A grateful Sense of the Benefits receiv'd from Animals: 2. The considering these Animals as *Symbols* of the Divine Nature: 3. The Notion of God's pervading, and being present in all Things: 4. The *Egyptian* Use of *Asterisms*, or denoting Constellations by the Name of Animals: 5. The Doctrine of *Metempsychosis*, or human Souls transmigrating into the Bodies of Animals: And 6. The Invention of some *Egyptian* King or other, for his private Ends of Policy. All these Causes or Occasions, I say, our Author having examin'd and refuted, carries the Point somewhat farther than the learned *Marsham*, and concludes, that the true Original of *Brute-Worship* among the *Egyptians*, was their Use of *symbolical Writing*; for which he assigns a further Reason, viz. That when the Use of writing by *Letters* (as much more commodious than the other) came generally to prevail, the Priests still continu'd the *hieroglyphic Characters* in their Works of Science and Religion; and, as the other grew abstruse and obsolete to the Vulgar, to make them more sacred, the Priests, in a short Time, were the only Persons that cou'd read them, and then, to make them more sacred and mysterious, gave it out, that the Gods themselves were the Inventors of them, which might easily induce a deluded People to worship the very Creatures (as having something extraordinary in them) which their Gods had thought proper to delineate. Lib. iv.

(a) Sir *John Marsham*, Can. Chron. p. 38.

† *Herodotus* gives us an Instance of this in a *Roman*, who happening accidentally to kill a *Cat*, the Mob immediately gather'd about the House, where he was, and cou'd neither, by the Entreaties of some principal Men sent by the King, nor by the Fear of the *Romans*, with whom they were then negotiating a Peace, be prevail'd on to spare his Life.



A. M.  
2433, &c.  
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sometimes without any formal Trial or Process. The extravagant Worship which they paid to some of these Animal Deities, (as to the Bull, at *Memphis*; the Goat, at *Mandes*; the Lion, at *Leontapolis*; † the Crocodile, at the Lake *Moëris*; and to many others, at different Places) exceeds all Belief. For, they were kept in consecrated Enclosures, and well attended on by Men of high Rank, who, at great Expence, provided Victuals for them, which consisted of the greatest Dainties. Nor was this all: For these Creatures were wash'd in hot Baths, anointed with most precious Ointments, and perfum'd with the most odoriferous Scents. They lay on the richest Carpets, and other costly Furniture; and, (that they might want Nothing to make their Lives as happy as possible) they had the most beautiful Females of their several Kinds (to which they gave the Name of *Concubines*) provided for them.

WHEN any of these Animals dy'd, the *Egyptians* lamented them, as if they had been their dearest Children, and frequently laid out more than they were worth in their Burials. If a *Cat* dy'd in any House, all the Family shav'd their Eye-brows; and if a *Dog*, their whole Body: And thus, putting themselves in Mourning, they wrapp'd the dead Body up in fine Linnen, and carry'd it to be embalm'd; where, being anointed with Oil of Cedar, and other *aromatick* Preparations to keep it from Putrefaction, it was bury'd with

great Solemnity in a sacred Coffin. So true is that Reflection (1) of the Apostle, and with Regard to these *Egyptians* certainly it was made, that *though they knew God, yet they glorified him not as God; but changed the Glory of God into the Image of four-footed Beasts, and his Truth into a Lye; and worshipped and served the Creature, more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.* From Exod. i. to Chap. xiii.

BEFORE we leave *Egypt*, the sacred Historian seems to remind us to take a View of some of the monumental Works, that are found there, and which, having been built within the Compass of the Period, we are now upon, may well be presum'd to be the Product of some of the *Burthens* and hard Labour, which the *Egyptian* Kings laid upon the *Israelites*. Their monumental Works, and Structures.

† THE *Pyramids* were justly reckon'd one of the *Wonders* of the World, and there is more of them now remaining, than of all the other *Six*, which have been so much celebrated. Not far from the Place, where *Memphis* once stood, there are three of these Structures at no great Distance from each other; two of which are shut up, but the *Third*, which is the largest, and stands open for the Inspection of Travellers, we shall here describe, as a probable *Specimen* of all the rest. The Pyramids.

It is situate on a rocky Hill (which, in a gentle and easy Ascent, rises 100 Feet) in the sandy Desert of *Lybia*, about a Quarter of a Mile from the Plains of *Egypt*. Its *Basis* is generally suppos'd to be an exact Square,

Life. And (what may seem still more incredible) it is reported, that, at a Time, when there was a Famine in *Egypt*, which drove the Inhabitants to such Extremity, that they were forc'd to feed on one another, there was no one Person accus'd of having tasted of any of these *sacred* Animals. Universal History, l. 1. c. 3.

† The *Crocodile* seems to be the last Animal, to which Mankind cou'd be tempted to pay divine Adoration: But that this might be done with more Safety, one of these Creatures was train'd up to be tame, and familiar for the Purpose, and had his Ears adorn'd with Strings of Jewels and Gold, and his Forefeet with Chains. He was fed with consecrated Provisions at the Public Charge: And when Strangers went to see him, (which often happen'd out of Curiosity) they also carry'd him a Present of a Cake, dress'd Meat, and Wine, or a Drink made with Honey, which was offer'd to him by the Priests; and, when he died, his Body was embalm'd, and buried in a sacred Coffin, at *Afmoë*. Herodotus, l. 2. and Strabo, l. 17.

(1) Rom. i. 21, 23, 25.

† It is a common Opinion, that the Word *Pyramid* is deriv'd from the *Greek*, *Pyr*, or *Pur*, *Fire*; and that these Structures were so call'd from their Shape, which ascended from a broad Basis, and ended in a Point, like a Flame of Fire. Others, whose Opinion *Vossius* seems to approve, say, that the Name comes from the Word *Pyrus*, which, in the same Language, signifies *Wheat*, because they suppose them to have been the *Granaries* of the ancient *Egyptian* Kings. But a late Writer, vers'd in the *Coptick* Tongue, has given us another *Etymology* from that Language, where, in *Pouro* signifies a *King*, and *Misi*, a *Race* or *Generation*; and the Reason, why the *Pyramids* had this Name given them, was, as he tells us, because they were erected to preserve the Memory of the Princes (who were their Founders) and their Families. *Wilkins's Dissert. de Ling. Copt.* p. 108.



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*Square*, and every Side (according to those that have been as careful, as possible, in its Menfuration) about 693 *English* Feet: So that the whole *Area* of it contains 480,249 square Feet, or something more than *eleven Acres* of Ground. Its *Altitude*, if measur'd by its *Perpendicular*, is 481 Feet, but, if taken according to the *Inclination* of the Pyramid, as it ascends, it is exactly equal to a Side of its *Basis*.

THE Ascent to the Top of this Structure is by Degrees, or *Steps*, which run round the whole Pyramid in a *Level*, and, if the Stones were entire on every Side, wou'd make a narrow Walk. The first of these Steps is near four Feet in Height, and three in Breadth; but the higher one ascends, they proportionably diminish. They are made of massy and polish'd Stone, so very large, that the Breadth and Depth of every Step is one single Stone; but, as the Weather has, in many Places, worn these Steps, this Pyramid cannot be ascended without some Difficulty. According to the Computation of most modern Travellers, the Steps are 207 or 208 in Number, which end, \* on the Top, in an handsome *Platform*, cover'd with nine Stones (besides two, that are wanting at the Corners) of 16 or 17 Feet square, from whence you have a pleasant Prospect of *Old-Cairo*, and the adjacent Country.

ON the 16th Step, from the Bottom of this *Pyramid*, there is a Door, or Entry, of three Feet and an Half in Height, and a little less in Breadth, thro' which you descend insensibly, much about 76 Feet, and then come to another Passage, which very probably is of the same Dimensions with the first Entrance, but is so choak'd up with the Sand, which the Wind blows in, that it is no easy Matter for a Man of any Bulk to squeeze himself through it. Having pass'd this *Streight* however you meet with Nothing deserving Observation, till, on the left Hand, you enter a Passage, which leads into a Gallery 16 Feet

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high, and 162 Feet long; a very stately Piece of Work indeed, and not inferior, either in Curiosity of Art, or Richness of Materials, to the most sumptuous and magnificent Buildings! The Stone, of which this Gallery is built, is a white polish'd Marble, very evenly cut into large Tables, and jointed so close, as hardly to be perceiv'd by the most curious Eye: But what adds a Grace to the whole Structure, though it makes the Passage the more slippery and difficult, is the Actlivity, or Rising of the Ascent, which, however, is not a little facilitated by certain Holes, made in the Floor, about six Hands Breadth from one another, into which a Man may set his Feet, whilst he holds by a Bench of Marble, which runs all along the *Gallery*, with one Hand, and carries his Light in the other.

As soon as you come to the End of this Gallery, you enter another square *Hole*, much of the same Dimensions with the former, which brings you into two little Rooms, lin'd with a rich Kind of speckled Marble; and thence you proceed into the *Chambers of the Tombs*, or Sepulchres, which is very large and spacious, 32 Feet long, 16 Feet wide, and 19 Feet high. This Room stands, as it were, in the Heart and Center of the *Pyramid*, equidistant from all the Sides, and almost in the Midst between the *Basis* and the Top. The Floor, the Sides, and the Roof of it are all made of vast and exquisite Tables of *Thebaick* Marble, which, if they were not fully'd with the Steam of Torches, wou'd certainly appear very bright and shining. From the Top to the Bottom of the Chamber, there are about six Ranges of this Stone, which, being all siz'd to an equal Height, run very gracefully round it. The Roof is flat, and consists but of nine Stones, whereof seven, in the Middle, are each four Feet wide, and 16 Feet long, but the other two, which are at each End, appear not above 2 Feet broad a-piece, because

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the

\* On this Platform *Proclus* suppos'd that the *Egyptian* Priests made their *Astronomical* Observations: But it is far from being probable, that these Structures were design'd for *Observatories*, and it is scarce to be conceiv'd, that the Priests wou'd take the Pains to ascend so high, when they might make the same Observations with more Ease, and as much Certainty below, having as free and open a Prospect of the Heavens, and over the Plains of *Egypt*, from the Rock, whereon it was built, as from the Pyramid itself. *Universal History*.

From Exod.  
i. to Chap.  
xiii.



A. M.  
2433, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1571, &c.

the other Half of them is built into the Wall. The Stones lie a-thwart, over the Breadth of the Chamber, with their Ends resting upon the Walls on each Side.

AT the End of this glorious Room stands an empty Tomb, 3 Feet and an Inch wide, and 7 Feet 2 Inches long; the Stone, which it is made of, is the same with the Lining of the Room, a beautiful speckled Marble, above 5 Inches thick, and yet, being hollow within, and uncover'd at the Top, whenever it is struck, it sounds like a great Bell: Which is just such a Wonder, as the surprising *Echo*, that is heard in this Place, and, (as some Travellers tell us) will repeat the same Sound some ten or twelve Times together. The Figure of this Tomb is like an Altar, or two *Cubes* finely set together. It is cut smooth and plain, exquisitely finely polish'd, but without any Sculpture or Engraving. It is not to be doubted, but that the Tomb was plac'd here, before the Pyramid was finish'd; and one Reason for its Want of Ornaments may be what the Inhabitants of the Country tell us, *viz.* That it was built for the Sepulchre of a King, who was never bury'd in it; and the common Opinion is, that it was the same *Pharaoh*, who, by the just Judgment of God, was drown'd in the *Red-Sea*.

THESE are the principal Things, that have been observ'd of this *Pyramid*; only, (to give us a still fuller Idea of the Vastness of its Structure) *Pliny* has taken Care to inform us, that it was 20 Years in building; that 37,000 Men were, every Day, employ'd in the Work; and that 1800 Talents were expended upon them merely for Radishes and Onions. Which last Article may seem incredible perhaps to those, that were never in the Country; but when it is consider'd, that this is the ordinary Food of the common People, and that almost all those, who were employ'd in raising these great Piles, were Slaves and *Mercenaries*, who, besides Bread and Water, had Nothing but Radishes and Onions, there will be no Occasion, for any

Surprize or Wonder at the suppos'd Largeness of this Account.

A BUILDING of the like Date, and not of inferior Grandeur, was the *Labyrinth*, which stood in the *Heracleotick Nome*, or Province, near the City of *Arfinoë*, and not far from the Lake *Mæris*. The Design of this Structure seems to have been both for a *Pantheon*, or universal Temple for all the Gods, that were worshipp'd in the several Places of *Egypt*; and also for a general *Convention-House*, for the States of the whole Nation to meet, and enact Laws, and determine Causes of great Importance: And therefore it is said by some, to have been built at the common Charge of the twelve Kings, who, in those Days, reign'd all at once, in *Egypt*, as a Monument of their Magnificence, and a Place for their Sepulture.

To this Purpose *Herodotus* (*m*) tells us, that each Province or *Nome* had, in this Building, a distinct *Hall*, where its principal Magistrates us'd to meet; that these Halls were vaulted, were surrounded with Pillars of white Stone finely polish'd, and had an equal Number of Doors, opposite to one another, *six* opening to the *North*, and *six* to the *South*, all encompass'd by the same Wall; that there were three thousand Chambers in this Edifice, fifteen hundred in the upper Part, and as many under Ground; and that he view'd every Room in the upper Part, but was not permitted by those, who kept the Palace, to go into the subterraneous Part, because the Sepulchres of the holy *Crocodiles*, and of the Kings, who built the *Labyrinth*, were there. What he saw there, *as he reports*, seem'd to surpass the Art of Man: So many Ways out, by various Passages, and infinite Returns, afforded a thousand Occasions of Wonder, as he pass'd from a spacious Hall to a Chamber, from thence to a private Closet, then again into other Passages out of the Closet, and, out of the Chambers, into more spacious Rooms; where all the Walls and Roofs were not only encrust'd with Marble, but richly adorn'd likewise with Figures of Sculpture.

From Exod.  
i. to Chap.  
xiii.

The Labyrinth.

To

(m) Lib. ii.



A. M.  
2433, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1571, &c.

From Exod.  
i. to Chap.  
xiii.  
  
Joseph's Well.

To this Description of *Herodotus* others add, that this Edifice stood in the Midst of an immense Square, furrounded with Buildings at a great Distance; that the Porch was of *Parian* Marble, and all the other Pillars of the Marble of *Syene*; that within it were the Temples of the several Deities, and Galleries, to which one ascended by 90 Steps, adorn'd with many Columns of *Porphyry*, Images of their Gods, and Statues of their Kings, of a monstrous Size; that the whole Edifice consisted of Stone, the Floors were laid with vast Tables, and the Roof look'd like one continu'd Field of Stone; that the Passages met and cross'd one another, with so much Intricacy, that it was impossible for a Stranger to find his Way, either in or out, without a Guide; and that several of the Apartments were so contriv'd, that, upon opening the Doors, there was heard within a terrible Noise of Thunder.

SUCH was the Strength of this wonderful Building, that it withstood, for many Ages, not only the Rage of Time, but that of the Inhabitants of *Heracleopolis*, who, worshipping the *Ichneumon*, or *Water-Rat*, the mortal Enemy of the *Crocodile*, (which was a peculiar Deity of *Arfinoë*) bore an inconceivable Hatred to the *Labyrinth*, which was the Sepulchre, as we said, of the sacred *Crocodiles*, and therefore assaulted and demolish'd it, tho' \* there are some *Remains* of it still to be seen, which retain manifest Marks of its ancient Splendor.

ONE Building more, suppos'd to be the Work of this Period, though, according to modern Accounts, it still stands firm and entire, is the *Well* of the Patriarch *Joseph*. It is entirely hewn out of a Rock, in a kind of an *oval*, or *oblong* Form, being eighteen Feet wide, twenty-four long, and, in the Whole, two hundred and seventy-six deep. The Depth is properly divided into two Parts, which we may call the *upper*, and the *lower* Well; and to each of these there is a Wheel, which being turn'd round by two Oxen in each Place, draws up the Water by a long Chain, to which are fasten'd several leathern Vessels, that fill and empty themselves *alternately*, as the Wheel goes round.

To go down to the *second* Well, (as we call it) which is but 15 Feet long, and nine wide, there is a Stair-Case, of so easy a Descent, that, some say, the Oxen, which draw the Water below, are, every Day, drove down and up it; tho' others report, that they are let down, and drawn up upon a Platform. However this be, it is certain that the Stair-Case turns twelve Times round the Well, (for which Reason the *Arabs* call it *the Well of the winding Stair-Case*) and of these Turnings, six have eighteen Steps each, and the other six have nineteen, which make two hundred and twenty-two Steps in all: And, to secure you from falling, as you go down, you have, on the Left-Hand, the *main* Rock, and on the *Right*, some of the same Rock left,

\* The Remains of this noble Structure are thus describ'd by our Author. "The first Thing you see, is a large Portico of Marble, facing the rising Sun, and sustain'd by four great Marble Pillars, but compos'd of several Pieces. Three of these Pillars are still standing, but one of the middle ones is half fallen. In the Middle is a Door, whose Sides and Entablature are very massy; and above is a Frize, whereon is represented an Head with Wings, stretch'd out along the Frize, and several Hieroglyphics underneath. ——— Passing through this Portico, you enter into a fine large Hall, above 40 Feet high, all of Marble. The Roof consists of twelve Tables of Marble, exquisitely join'd, each 25 Feet long, and three broad, which cross the Room from one End to the other; and, as the Room is not arch'd, but flat, you cannot but be struck with Admiration at the Boldness of its Architecture, since it is scarce conceivable, how it could continue, so many Ages, in a Position so improper to support so prodigious a Weight. At the End of this Hall, over against the first Door, there is a second Portico, with the same Ornaments as the first, but less, by which you enter into a second Hall, not so big as the first, but cover'd with eight Stones. At the End of this Room, straight forwards, there is a third Portico, still less than the second, as well as the Hall into which it leads, though it has sixteen Stones to roof it; and, at the End of this third Hall, there is a fourth Portico set against the Wall, and plac'd there for Symmetry only, and to answer the rest. The Length of these three Halls, is the whole Depth of the Building, in its present Condition. It was on the two Sides, and especially under Ground, that the prodigious Number of Rooms and Avenues, mention'd by the *Antients*, were built. ——— What is now remaining of it seems to be no more than a fourth Part of the inner Edifice, which, in all Probability, had four Fronts, and twelve Halls, answering to them: The rest are decay'd by Time, or demolish'd by Design, as appears from the prodigious Ruins, which are to be seen all around it." *Lucas's Voyages*, T. II. p. 18, &c.



A. M.  
2433, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1571, &c.

left, which serves both as a Wall to the Well on the Inside, and on the other Side, as a Wall to the Stair-Case; which, at convenient Distances, has Windows cut in it, that convey the Light down from the Mouth of the Well.

WHEN you go down to the lower Well (which has likewise a Stair-Case, but neither so wide, nor so deep as the other, and no *Parapet* on the Side of the Well, which makes the Descent dangerous) it is here that you see the Oxen at work, turning the Wheel, and drawing the Water from a Spring at the Bottom, about eight or nine Feet deep, which Water, passing through a Pipe into a large Cistern, is from thence drawn up again by two other Oxen, which turn the Wheel above; and so, from a *Reservoir* at the Top of the Well, the Water is convey'd into all the Apartments of the Castle of *Grand Cairo*, which (by the bye) as *Thevenot* tells us, both for Strength and Beauty, is one of the finest Palaces he ever saw; a Work not unworthy the antient *Pharaohs* and *Ptolemys*, who built it, and what comes not behind the Pomp and Magnificence of the *Pyramids*.

THERE are some other Buildings in this Place, such as *Joseph's Hall*, *Joseph's Prison*, *Joseph's Granaries*, &c. which the Inhabitants ascribe to that Patriarch, as they do indeed every fine Piece of Antiquity: But, as there is little or no Probability, that any of these came under the *Period*, we are now upon, we must refer

the Reader, who is minded to satisfy his Curiosity in this Matter, (n) to the Authors, who have purposely treated of them; and shall only take notice farther, that the great *Selden*, in his *Arundel Marbles*, reckons the fabulous Stories of *Greece*, such as the Flood of *Deucalion*, the Burning of *Phaëton*, the Rape of *Proserpine*, the Mysteries of *Ceres*, the Story of *Europa*, the Birth of *Apollo*, and the Building of *Thebes* by *Cadmus*, together with the Fables of *Bacchus*, *Minos*, *Perseus*, *Æsculapius*, *Mercury*, and *Hercules*, to have fallen out under this Period; and it is certain that (o) the learned *Spanheim* makes several ancient Kingdoms, as that of the *Argives*, the *Cretans*, the *Phrygians*, the *Ethiopians*, the *Phœnicians*, the *Midianites*, *Canaanites*, *Idumæans*, and *Nabatheans*, either to have been founded, or to have flourish'd in this Time. But as these, and other Heathen Nations, had no *Historian*, or *Chronologer* of their own, and the *Greeks*, who undertook to write for them, for Want of a certain Knowledge of their Affairs, have stuff'd their Accounts with the Rapes and Robberies of their Gods; we thought it more proper to stop here, than to enter into a barren Land, where the Country, for a long Way, lies waste and uncultivated; or, if perchance any *Fruit* is to be seen, like the fam'd fictitious *Apples* about the Banks of the *Dead-Sea*, it crumbles, at the very first Touch, into *Dust* and *Ashes*.

From Exod.  
i. to Chap.  
xiii.

(n) Vide, *Della Valle*, *Thevenot*, *Le Bruyn*, *Lucas*, *Marco Grimani*, &c. Travels; and *Well's* Geography of the Old Testament, Vol. II.

(o) Vid. Hist. Vet. Test. Col. 310.

The End of the Third Book.

T H E





T H E  
H I S T O R Y  
O F T H E  
B I B L E.  
B O O K I V.

*Containing an Account of Things, from the ISRAELITES  
Departure out of EGYPT, to their Entrance into the  
Land of CANAAN. In all forty Years.*

C H A P. I.

*From their Departure, to the Building of the Tabernacle.*

The H I S T O R Y.



W H E N the *Israelites* set out from *Egypt*, they made *Rameses*, the chief City of *Goshen*, the Place of their general *Rendezvous*; and from thence, on the *fifteenth* Day of the *first* Month, they travell'd about ten or twelve Miles, to *Succoth*, where they made a Stop, and review'd

their Company, which consisted of six hundred Thousand Persons, besides Children and Strangers: For Strangers of several Nations, having seen the Wonders, which were wrought for their Deliverance, left *Egypt* at the same Time, with a Purpose to accompany their Fortunes.

W H I L E the Sense of their Deliverance, and God's Judgments was fresh in their  
6 G Minds,

From Exod. xiii. to Chap. xxxiv. 24.

A. M.  
2513, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1491, &c.

The *Israelites* set forward from *Rameses*, and arrive at *Succoth*.



A. M.  
2513, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1491, &c.

Minds, *Moses* was commanded to let the People know, that when they came to be settled in the Land of *Canaan*, the *First-born*, both of Man and Beast, in Remembrance of God's having spar'd their *First-born* when he destroy'd the *Egyptians*, shou'd be set a-part, and dedicated to him : And, as *Joseph*, dying in the Faith of this their Deliverance, had laid an Injunction upon his Brethren, whenever they shou'd go from thence, to carry his Bones out of *Egypt* ; so *Moses* † took care to have the Coffin, wherein he had lain embalm'd for above an hundred and forty Years, not left behind.

Are thence  
guided by the  
Pillar of a  
Cloud (as af-  
terwards all  
along) to E-  
tham.

† FROM *Succoth* their nearest Way to *Canaan* was certainly through the Country of the *Philistines* ; but, for fear that a People, unaccustom'd to War, shou'd, in case of any Opposition, repent of their Deliverance, and take it into their Heads

to return into *Egypt*, God order'd them to take their *Rout* along the Coasts of the *Red-Sea* ; and, for their greater Encouragement and Security, himself undertook to guide and direct them, both in their *Marches* and *Encampments*, by the wonderful Appearance of a *Cloud*, in the Form of a large *Column*, which shaded them from the Heat of the Sun by Day, and, in the Night-time, became a Pillar of Fire, or a bright Cloud, to supply the Sun's Absence, and illuminate their Camp. By this Means they were enabled, upon any Occasion, to march both Day and Night : And, under this auspicious Guide, proceeding from *Succoth*, they came to *Etham*, (which gives Name to the Wilderness, on whose Borders it is situated) and there they encamp'd.

From Exod.  
xiii. to Chap.  
xxxiv. 24.

IN the mean Time, the † King of *Egypt* had Information brought him, that the

And thence to  
Pi-hahiroth.

† The *Jews* tell us, that, upon the *Israelites* Departure out of *Egypt*, every *Tribe* took care to bring along with them the Bones of the Ancestor of their Family : But, though they are not always to be credited in Matters of this Nature, and *Josephus* does not seem to have dreamt of any such Act of filial Piety, or else he wou'd, in all Probability, have recorded it ; yet St *Stephen* (Acts vii. 15, 16.) seems to allude to some such Tradition among them, when he tells us, that *Jacob and the Fathers went down into Egypt, and were carry'd over into Sychem, and laid in the Sepulchre, which Abraham had bought of the Sons of Emmor*. Universal History, l. i. c. 7.

† It is somewhat difficult to make out the Geography of the Places where the *Hebrews* encamp'd, between their parting from *Rameses*, and their Arrival at the *Red-Sea* ; but the Account of those who have wrote upon the Subject, is,——That though there are two Places nam'd *Rameses*, which are a little differently pointed ; yet are they but one and the same, or, at the most, that they differ only in this, that the one was the *Province*, and the other the chief City of it : That *Succoth*, not far from *Rameses*, in the Way to the *Red-Sea*, had its Name from the Tents (for so the *Hebrew* Word signifies) which the *Israelites* pitch'd here, as we find, upon the like Occasion, another Place, between *Jordan* and the Brook *Jabbock*, so named : That *Etham* lay on the Confines of *Egypt* and *Arabia Petraea*, not far from the *Red-Sea*, and gave the Denomination to the Wilderness adjacent : That *Pi-hahiroth*, which, in our *English*, and some other Translations, is render'd as one proper Name, is by the *Septuagint* made Part of it an Appellative, so as to signify a Mouth (for so the Word *Pi* may mean) or narrow Passage between two Mountains, lying not far from the western Coast of the *Red-Sea* : That *Magaol* was probably a Tower or Castle (for the Word carries that Signification in it) upon the Top of one of these Mountains, which might give Denomination to the City, which (as *Herodotus* informs us) lay not far distant from it ; and that *Baal Zephon* was by some learned Men thought to be an Idol set up to keep the Borders of the Country, and to hinder Slaves from making their Escape. *Baal* indeed, in the *Hebrew* Tongue, signifies Lord, and hence the Name is generally apply'd to the Eastern Idols ; and the Word *Zephon* is thought to be deriv'd from the Radix *Zapab*, to watch or spy ; and from hence it is conjectur'd, that this Idol had its Temple on the Top of some adjacent Mountain, and that the sacred Historian particularly takes notice of it, to shew how unable it was (whatever Opinion the *Egyptians* might have of it) to hinder the *Israelites* from going out of *Egypt*. There is but small Certainty however to be gather'd from the Etymology of Words ; and therefore the Authority of *Eusebius* shou'd preponderate with us, who makes it not an Idol, but a Town, standing upon the Northern Point of the *Red Sea*, where the Ancients, especially the *Jews*, think that the *Israelites* pass'd it, and where there stands, to this Day, a Christian Monastery. *Patrick's* and *Calmet's* Commentaries, his Dissertation on the Passage of the *Red-Sea*, and *Wells's* Geography of the Old Testament, Vol. II.

† It is not unlikely, that some of the mixt Multitude (Exod. xii. 38.) which went along with the *Israelites*, observing this Alteration in their *Rout*, and not being able to perceive the Reason of it, might forsake them, and, returning to *Pharaoh*, inform him, that they had lost their Way, and were intangl'd among the Mountains : Or, (what is more likely) some Spies, which *Pharaoh* had upon them, seeing them leave the Way to *Horeb*, where they desir'd to go three Days Journey, in order to offer Sacrifices, concluded, that they never intended to return to *Egypt*, but were running quite away, and might therefore bring *Pharaoh* the News thereof (as we may suppose) upon the 18th Day. *Patrick's* Commentary.



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the *Israelites*, instead of returning to his Dominions, were attempting their Escape into the *Deserts* of *Arabia*, by the *Cape* of the *Red-Sea*: And therefore grieving at the Loss of so many useful Slaves, and supposing, that by speedy Marches, he might overtake and recover them, he muster'd up what Forces he cou'd, and, for the greater Expedition, a considerable Quantity of \* Chariots and Horsemen, and with these \* put himself upon the Pursuit. But God, who well understood what Measures were taking in *Pharaoh's* Court, instead of suffering the *Israelites* to march round the Point of the † *Red-Sea*, as they probably intended, order'd them

to advance along the *Coasts* of it, until they came to *Pi-bahiroth*, which lies between *Migdol* and the Sea, and there to encamp.

By this Time *Pharaoh* and his Army were come up with them; and, when the *Israelites* perceiv'd themselves hemm'd in on every Side, with the Sea in their *Front*, huge Mountains on their *Flank*, and the *Egyptian* Army in the *Rear*, they began to despair of any Means of Escape, and to clamour against *Moses* for having induc'd them to leave *Egypt*, and for bringing them into the Wilderness to be sacrific'd. *Moses*, however, being appriz'd of God's Design, instead of \* resenting their Reproaches, endeavour'd to comfort them, by

From Exod.  
xiii. to Chap.  
xxxiv. 24.

The Egyptians  
pursue them.

\* *Josephus*, who loves to magnify Matters, when they tend to the Glory of his Countrymen, as well as conceal what wou'd occasion their Disgrace, tells us, that the *Egyptian* Army consisted of 600 Chariots, 50,000 Horse, and 200,000 Foot: But how so large a Number cou'd be rais'd in so short a Time, or what Need there was of so vast an *Armament* against a weak and defenceless People, is hardly conceivable. As therefore we may presume, that the Haste, which the *Egyptians* were in lest the *Israelites* shou'd get out of the Streights, wherein they were intangl'd, or make their Escape some other Way, before they came up with them, made them pursue them with Chariots and Horsemen for the greater Expedition; so we may observe, that the Chariots, they employ'd in this Pursuit, are call'd *chosen Chariots*; which most Interpreters imagine to be such, as were arm'd with *Scythes*, which being drawn with Horses, and fill'd with Men, who threw Darts and Spears, and other *offensive* Weapons from them, cou'd not but make a strange Havock wherever they came; and the Number, which the Scripture mentions, under proper *Captains* who might have the Direction of them, was enough to destroy all the *Israelites*, being worn with hard Bondage, weary'd with marching, destitute of Arms, Strangers to War, and now encamp'd in a very disadvantageous Situation. *Josephus's* Antiquities, l. 2. c. 15. *Ainsworth's* Annotations, and *Howell's* History.

\* "Of all the insatuated Resolutions (to use the Words of the learned Dr *Jackson*, l. 10. c. 11.) that either King or People adventur'd on, the pursuing the *Israelites* with such a mighty Army, after they had so intreated and urg'd them to leave their Country, may well seem, to every indifferent Reader, the most stupid, that ever was taken;" And so indeed the Author of the *Book of Wisdom*, Chap. xix. 3. justly censures it: For whilst they were yet mourning, says he, and making Lamentation at the Graves of the Dead, they added another foolish Device, and pursued them, as Fugitives, whom they had intreated to be gone. But how much soever it was, that the *Egyptians* had suffer'd for detaining the *Hebrews*; yet, now that they were gone, they possibly might be of the same Mind with the *Syrians* (1 Kings xx. 23.) who fancy'd, that the God of *Israel* might not be alike powerful in all Places; or, if he was, they might nevertheless think, that *Moses's* Commission extended no farther, than the *Meridian* of *Egypt*; or that if it did, it might however have no Power over mighty Hosts and Armies. They knew, at least, that the *Israelites*, as we said, had no Skill in military Matters, no Captains of Infantry, no Cavalry at all, no Weapons or Engines of War; whereas they were well furnish'd and equipp'd with every Thing of this Nature: And, upon these, and the like Presumptions, it was, that they became fool-hardy, and desperately resolute, either to bring back the *Israelites* to their Slavery, or to be reveng'd upon them for all the Losses, they had sustain'd, and the Penalties, they had suffer'd. *Patrick's* Commentary.

† The *Red-Sea*, call'd by the Antients *Sinus Arabicus*, and now *Gulfo de Mecca*, is that Part or Branch of the Southern Sea, which interposes itself between *Egypt* on the West; *Arabia-felix*, and some Part of *Petraea*, on the East; while the northern Bounds of it touch upon *Idumea*, or the Coast of *Edom*. *Edom*, in the *Hebrew* Tongue, signifies *Red*, and was the Nick-name given *Esau* for selling his Birth-right for a Mess of Pottage. The Country, which his Posterity possess'd, was call'd after his Name, and so was the Sea, which adjoin'd to it; but the *Greeks*, not understanding the Reason of the Appellation, translated it into their Tongue, and call'd it ἐρυθρὰ θάλασσα; thence the *Latins*, *Mare rubrum*, and we, the *Red-Sea*. The *Hebrews* call it the Sea of *Suph* or *Flags*, by Reason of the great Abundance of that Kind of Weed, which grows at the Bottom of it; and the *Arabs*, at this Day, name it *Bahr el Chalsam*, i. e. the Sea of *Chysona*, from a Town situate on its western Coast, much about the Place, where the *Israelites* pass'd over from the *Egyptian* to the *Arabian* Shore. But, as the Word *Chysona* may denote a drowning or overflowing with Water, it is not improbable that the Town built in this Place, as well as this Part of the Sea, might have such a Name given it, in Memory of the Fate of the *Egyptians*, who were drown'd herein. *Well's* Geography of the Old Testament, Vol. II.

\* The Words, which *Moses* makes himself speak upon this critical Occasion (Exod. xiv. 13, 14.) discover a wonderful Spirit and Bravery; and it is no bad Comment, which the *Jewish* Historian has given us of them. "Put

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by giving them Assurance, that God himself wou'd certainly *fight for them*, and by his Almighty Power bring Matters to such an Issue, that these very *Egyptians*, of whom they were so much afraid, shou'd not one of them live to molest them any more.

W I T H these comfortable Words, he order'd them to advance towards the Seaside; and, as they were advancing, the miraculous *Cloud* (we were speaking of) remov'd from the *Front* to the *Rear* of the *Israelites* Camp, and so turning its *dark Side* towards the *Egyptians*, made them incapable of knowing what they were about; while, by its bright or fiery Side, which it turn'd to the *Israelites*, it gave them a Sufficiency of Light, and kept the two Camps from joining that Night.

They pass the Red-Sea, where the Egyptians are all lost.

As soon as the *Israelites* came to the Brink of the Sea, *Moses* wav'd his sacred Rod, and immediately a strong *East-Wind* blew, and drove the Waves back from the Land, and, by dividing the Waters, which stood *suspended*, as it were a *Wall* on each Hand, made a dry and safe Passage for the *Israelites*, until they had gain'd the other Shore. The *Egyptians*, in the mean while, never suspecting but that

they, with their Chariots and Horsemen, might safely follow, where they saw the *Israelites* go on Foot, enter'd after them into the Midst of the Sea: But, about Break of Day, they began to see their Error, and \* their whole Army in the utmost Confusion. Their Chariots were some of them broken, others ran into Quick-sands, and others cast off their Carriages; so that, perceiving the Hand of God against them, they were turning about, and offering to flee, but all in vain. As soon as the *Israelites* were all landed, *Moses*, by the divine Command, stretch'd out his Rod again over the Sea: Whereupon the roaring Waves break loose from their *invisible Chain*, and come rushing upon *Pharaoh* and his Army, and overwhelm them all; while the *Israelites*, beholding, with Wonder and Amazement, the Carcasses, and rich Spoils of their Enemies thrown upon the Sea-shore, began, at least seemingly, to fear God, and to reverence his Servant *Moses*; who, to celebrate this joyful Deliverance, having compos'd a *triumphant Hymn*, wherein he extols the Greatness of God's Power, and his amazing Mercy to his *People* display'd on this Occasion, divided the Company into two great Choirs; and, setting himself, and his Brother

From Exod. xiii. to Chap. xxxiv. 24.

*Aaron*

" the Case, *says he*, that you had deposited some great Trust in the Hands of a Person, that had hitherto manag'd all well and wisely for you, might not you reasonably depend upon that Man for the same Care and Kindness, and in the same Case too over again? What a Madness is it for you to despond then, where God himself has taken you under his Protection, and, of his own free Bounty, perform'd every Thing by me, that can contribute to your Freedom and Security? Nay, the very Difficulty of the Case, you are in, is an Argument to inflame your Hope, rather than discourage it. He hath brought you into this Distress, on Purpose to shew his Power and Kindness in bringing you out again, even to the Surprise and Admiration of yourselves, as well as your Enemies. It is not God's Time to interpose with his almighty Power in small Matters, but in great and trying Calamities: When all Hopes of Human help fails us, that is the Season for him to work out the Deliverance of those, who cast themselves upon him. And therefore fear Nothing, so long as you have him for your Protector and Defender, who is able to raise the Lowly and Oppress'd, and to lay the Honour of their Persecutors in the Dust. Be not afraid of the *Egyptian* armed Troops, neither despond of your Lives and Safeties, because you are, at present, lock'd up between the Sea and the Mountains, and have no visible Way in Nature to come off; for the God, whom you serve, is able to level all these Mountains, and lay the Ocean dry. His Will, in fine, be done." *Josephus's Antiquities*, l. 2. c. 15.

\* The Expression in the Text is, that God troubled the Host of the Egyptians; and, to enforce the Strength of this Expression, the *Jewish* Historian tells us, that, before God let loose the Waves upon the *Egyptians*, fierce Winds and Tempests, Storms of Hail and Rain, terrible Thunderings and Lightnings, and whatever else cou'd make their Condition horrible, were sent down upon them from above; and therefore it is not without good Reason, that these Words of the *Psalmist* have been apply'd to this Occasion. *The Waters saw thee, O God, the Waters saw thee, and were afraid; the Depths also were troubled: The Clouds poured out Water, the Air thundered, and thine Arrows went abroad. The Voice of thy Thunder was heard round about, the Lightning shone upon the Ground, the Earth was moved, and shook withal. Thy Way is in the Sea, and thy Paths, in the great Waters, and thy Footsteps are not known: Whereupon it follows, thou ledest thy People, like Sheep, by the Hand of Moses and Aaron.* *Josephus's Antiquities*, l. 2. and *Plal. lxxvii. 16, &c.*